The History of Yukon First Nations Art

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I would like to thank my supervising professors, Dr. Adelaar and Dr. Jansen, for their support of my subject and open mindedness about my research approach.

I have visited over forty museums over the course of my research into the history of Yukon First Nations art and I would like to thank them for allowing access to their collections and for the help they provided. Below are the museums I visited. The list is in no particular order and includes some cultural organizations that I received help from.

In the Yukon: MacBride Museum, Old Log Church Museum, Yukon Archives, Yukon Archaeology and Museums from Cultural Services, Dawson City Museum, Kluane Museum of Natural History, Mayo Historical Society, Atlin Historical Society, Klukshu Museum, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and the Council for Yukon First Nations.

In Alaska: the University of Alaska Museum of the North, the Anchorage City Museum, the Alaska State Museum, the Sheldon Jackson Museum, The National Park Service, The Sheldon Museum, and the Alaska Native Heritage Center.

In Canada: Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Glenbow Museum and Vancouver Museum, The Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Manitoba Museum.

In the United States: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, the Burke Museum, The Field Museum of Natural History, The Hood Museum of Art in Hanover, the Peabody Museum, National Museum of Natural History & National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian,

In Europe: Ethnologisches Museum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum fur Volkerkunde Hamburg, Museum Weltkulturen der Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen in Mannheim, Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde München, Linden-Museum Stuttgart, and Museum der Weltkulturen in Frankfurt, all in Germany.
The British Museum in London and the Pitt River Museum in Oxford, United Kingdom, Nàprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures in Prague, Musée d'Ethnographie de Geneva (MEG) in Geneva, National Museum of Denmark, Ethnographic Collections in Copenhagen, Departamento de Etnología Museo de América in Madrid, National Museum of Finland in Helsinki, Musée du quai Branly in Paris; Peter the Great Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia, Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna, Department of Ethnography at the University Museum Cultural History of Oslo, Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden, Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm,

I would like to thank the staff of these museums for allowing me to examine, photograph and/or use the photographs of their collections for the creation of this dissertation. I would also like to thank them for their support in my research, even if there ended up being no artifacts that I used from their museums.

Over the course of my research there have been a great number of people I have talked to and have offered their help. Since I started my research some of the people have passed away, and with them an irreplaceable amount of knowledge about my culture. I am so grateful that they were willing to impart some of that knowledge. Following are the people I offer my thanks to. The locations refer to the place I talked to them, which may not be their home communities:

In Whitehorse: Annie Ned, May Long, Emma Shorty, Norma Shorty, Irene Smith, Annie and Johnny Smith, Dinah Jim, Ingrid Johnson, Dave Neufeld, Rolf Hougen, Greg Hare, Ruth Gotthardt, Valery Monahan , Jim Robb, Keith Wolf-Smarch, Stan Peters, Diane Strand and Linda Harvey ; in Carmacks: Gary Sam; in Haines Junction: Marge Jackson and Mary Deguerre; in Klukshu: Frances Joe and Paul Birkel; in Ross River: Amos Dick, Ted Charlie, Kathlene Suza, and Norman Sterriah; in Upper Laird: Mida Donnessey and in Haines, Alaska, Irene Rowan.

I would also like to offers my gratitude to my wife, Pam van Kampen, who was always willing to read my drafts and ask for explanations about the contents of this dissertation. This exposed those areas that were clear for me, but would have proven foggy for everybody else.

I dedicate this thesis to my two daughters, Shadunjen (Sunchild-Southern Tutchone) and Yayata (Little Sky-Northern Tutchone) and hope they grow up in a world full of south-central Yukon First Nations artistic imagery.

Introduction

The Question

My aim in this thesis is to answer the question "Was there an early Yukon First Nations art, and if so, what was it like?" A close secondary question follows: "If there was an early Yukon First Nation art style, what happened to that art and why did it vanish?" I will further be firm and persistent in arguing that the majority of present day First Nations art created in the Yukon is not traditional to the area. I hope it will become clear to the reader that the importance of this clarification (what is and what is not traditional Yukon First Nations art) for my people and our present day identity is crucial.

Personal Comments about the Research

I will make a few comments about my approach to this thesis, which can be summed up as a blend of the Euro-Western and Indigenous research methodology. They are equally valid for this thesis. The Indigenous approach has the following elements:

To start off, I am not an archaeologist or art historian. Although I have studied in the areas of culture and art history, my foremost contribution comes from being **an insider** to my culture. Some of the knowledge is bred in my bones, given to me by my birth as well as the environment while growing up. This is important in Indigenous research because of the mistrust First Nations people have developed for White researchers.

Shawn Wilson points out in *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* non-Indigenous researchers consistently research Indigenous people but with no benefits to those Indigenous peoples:

> Many residents of Indigenous communities in North America and Australia believe that Indigenous people are among the most studied on earth (for example, see Rigney, 1999; Smith, 1999). While this belief in itself may be debatable, it is based in the fact that indigenous people are accustomed to research being conducted in their communities. This research has neither been asked for, nor had any relevance for the communities being studied. People are accustomed to seeing researchers come into their communities, do whatever it is they do and leave, never to be heard from again. Because community members are for the most part excluded from the research process, they have become resentful to research in general. (Wilson 2008:15)

This resentment will already affect any research that is conducted because the people that the researcher is working with already have an opinion that may alter the results. The difference is that I work with people in my community who already know me, some since I was a child. In many of the Yukon communities I have relatives and they often know my mother and thus know who I am related to and where I fit in. As a result I am part of their world and they know I am not going away, never to be heard from again.

Communication that I have conducted with my people, mostly Elders, has not involved studying their behaviors and practices (I grew up with these) but **working *with*** them to gain a bigger understanding of Yukon First Nations art. This is why I think that Elders sometimes told me stories that were not previously recorded by White researchers; there was an inherent trust. It is with dismay that I reflect on the fact that some researchers have come to interview and live with Yukon First Nations people; once the research was "complete" and their degrees attained, the results were often not shared with the people who contributed to

the research. Saying that, I do owe my gratitude to some well respected White scholars, for without them I would have had a much more daunting task in finishing this dissertation.

Feeling and relationship with my people is more important than an often unobtainable objectivity. Although I strive for a certain amount of objectivity, I believe that it has its shortcomings and can negatively affect my relationship with my people. For example, I need to allow for different versions of a story or various descriptions of the meanings of objects when these are given by Elders. This does not pose a conflict of "truth" in our worldview. The concept of reliability and validity has at times made way for credibility and authenticity. Slow, unstructured time spent with members of my community is often more valuable than working in a time frame with clear goals in mind. There have been many situations where I had to let go of control of my goals when spending time with Elders. Elders sometimes tell me what I need to know and not what I am trying to find out. It has been important to have a relationship with the people I interview first.

A bigger comfort and skill level is present in my oral rendering of my knowledge versus writing it down. My culture was oral until recently and this seems to come more natural to me. I am more effective in front of a class than writing this paper! The western world has been writing for thousands of years and over time developed a writing paradigm that is understood in the western world. Yukon First Nations people have only slowly adopted writing just over a century ago. Writing became more widespread for Yukon First Nations people after World War Two. I have often been told that I write like I speak. I have had short stories published but only with First Nations presses because they understand First Nations writing and storytelling. Basically we may write our stories in circles where in many ways there is no beginning, nor end. These stories can be hooked up with other stories in any order as part of a bigger series of stories. We write as if we are addressing a group of people we have a relationship with and understand the context

It is because I am an artist that I began my research to find my own people's art style. In my culture, there is little separation between art and science. I approach knowledge not only through the intellect, but also through my intuition and senses, which is strengthened by my work as an artist. Rather than simply researching and recording the art I have also been creating the images of my culture. Working with the early images and art forms of my people has given me a deeper understanding of the art than if I had just recorded these images.

I am not only focusing on the past physical remains of my culture, but am also examining the present art situation. I am a living member of this culture. I have my own experiences to draw from and more importantly I have been given the trust of my people who shared with me their knowledge and wisdom.

Even though the academic education system is my vehicle for presenting my research, the goal of recording and presenting my culture to my people is more important than satisfying the academic community. I am seeking a partnership that on the one hand preserves my culture in a form that makes it more welcoming for First Nations people and on the other satisfies the academic requirements. I work at explaining things with my own First Nations readers in mind. This is done by avoiding information that is not related to my culture, unless I feel it will help explain the item with more clarity. For the same reason I have avoided complex words in order to make the thesis easier to read.

The land is very important to my research. All knowledge has to connect to the land in order to make sense. This made me intuitively withhold from making comparative studies to other First Nations peoples. This land is vast and even tribes from neighboring territories outside the region of the western arctic have lesser relevance to my studies (excepting the Northwest Coast Tlingits with whom my people had close relations). It is the land that is our world, the landforms that can give us some of our histories and stories. It is the land that provides for us in the form of food and materials. Knowing the land is important

in relating to the animals who give us food, clothing, shelter and guidance. How things are done and understood in one region may have no relation in another.

I try not to make comparisons with the dominant culture views or even, as I mentioned earlier, with other Indigenous views outside my region of research. I have however the advantage of understanding both the Indigenous methods as well as the dominant western academic worldview. Here is a bit more from Shawn Wilson and his *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*:

> Ray Barnhart and Oscar Kawagley in their writing talk about "complexity theory". It explains what most Indigenous scholars go through. Complexity theory provides an emergent system that melds the "formal" and Indigenous knowledge systems. Applying this theory allows for better negotiation in defining Indigenous education systems. As I understand the theory, one of the great strengths that Indigenous scholars bring with them is the ability to see and work within both the Indigenous and dominant worldviews. This becomes of great importance when working with dominant system academics, who are usually not bicultural. Oftentimes then, ideas coming from a different worldview are outside their entire mindset and way of thinking. The ability to bridge this gap becomes important in order to ease the tensions it creates. (Wilson 2008:44)

As to the Euro-Western research paradigm methods, I have used the humanities and artistic approach. I have conducted my research using the following methods:

- Identification of research problem
- Literature review
- Specifying the purpose of research
- Determine specific research questions or hypotheses
- Data collection
- Analyzing and interpreting the data
- Reporting and evaluating research

This is a brief synopsis of the Indigenous research approach I took. Fortunately, in recent years there has been a long overdue acceptance in more academic circles of accepting the Indigenous voice in scholarship. This is in reaction to the failures of academic research of Indigenous peoples and their cultures. Most experts of First Nations and other Indigenous cultures are non-Indigenous! Almost all professors that are teaching Indians or Native American Studies are non-Native. In the Yukon many of the people who are deemed to be the authorities on Yukon First Nations culture and publicly present about Yukon First Nations Culture are White. The western academic system has also failed to prevent the appropriation of our culture. In *World Art Studies* van Damme begins to explore the idea of the acceptance of Indigenous art research and states:

> Can the analytical apparatus of art scholarship be similarly enriched by concepts deriving from intellectual traditions outside the West (see also Coa, this volume)? There would seem to be no reason why this could not be the case. Given the underdetermined nature of many of the basic terms with which we presently approach the study of the visual arts, and try to communicate transculturally-fundamental terms such as "image," "representation," or "creativity," "aesthetic experience," and so on-there is indeed plenty of room for semantically more precise terms, as well as for terms filling semantic gaps (that we may not even be aware of until a suitably refined

> concept is proposed). It should, however, be observed that any proposal for cross-cultural applicability of a term developed in a particular system of thought does not sit well with insistence on cultural contingency of concepts. Ideally, such proposals should be made by representatives of the tradition or culture concerned, in order to minimize the everpresent risk of accusations of appropriation. (van Damme & Zijlmans 2008: 49)

By being a member of the culture I am researching I am helping reduce the continued appropriation of knowledge and objects from my people. For my people my research and dissertation is valid without the deep academic scientific tailoring. What is more, the scientific academic approach, or better yet, the lack of interest of the scientific community that has been generally a failure in letting anybody know what the early art of Yukon First Nations people was like. This dissertation is the first effort in describing the art history of Yukon First Nations people.

The Start of a Personal Quest

I first developed an interest for Tutchone and Athapaskan art in 1982 when I learned that I was an Athapaskan Northern Tutchone Indian and not a Chilkat Tlingit Indian, as I had always thought. I was 23 years old at the time and had been creating Tlingit style works of art since the age of 14. The Tutchone make up one of the groups that are part of the Athapaskan people, whose traditional territory includes a large area of northwestern North America. See figure # 4 on page 28 for a map to the Yukon First Nations peoples. Athapaskans had a generally similar lifestyle and art.

My uncertainty about identity is an example of the cultural confusion that my Yukon First Nations generation grew up with. I grew up during a time when it was unappealing to be an Indian. I knew Indian kids that were adopted by White families that had darker skin than I had and yet they would tell me they were not Indian but White. While I thought it was very obvious they were Indian I also understood their reluctance. After all, Indians were thought of by Whites and Indians as the lowest class of people in the Yukon. But why did I think I was a Tlingit in the first place? One reason is that the Southern Tutchone, which my grandfather belonged to, had strong trade links with the Chilkat Tlingits in Klukwan, Alaska and marriage between the groups was important to maintain those trade relations. I can trace some of my family lineage to the Coastal Tlingits. Since the Coastal Tlingit traders often married interior Yukon Athapaskan women, and Athapaskans have a matrilineal tradition, the children of the Tlingit traders would follow the wife's moiety (clan) and tribe and therefore were considered Athapaskan. My mother is Northern Tutchone because her mother is Northern Tutchone; therefore, I am Northern Tutchone.

Another reason for the confusion is the strong visual culture of the coastal Tlingits. I use the term ‘visual culture’ to indicate the artistic visual aspects of a people’s culture. In this I mean any decoration, image or symbol that is placed on any article of clothing, tool or implement of any sort for any reason by a group of people, as well as the use of those items in cultural activities such as dancing at a potlatch. These reasons may be to make the object fancy, as a form of identification or maybe as a representation of heraldry, heredity or spirituality. A group of people creates an identity through their imagery and becomes visually different to other groups of people.

Both Athapaskans and coastal Tlingits went through a cultural upheaval coming into the 20th century. After the Second World War, when the Athapaskans looked around for images of their culture, they would see nothing except beadwork and gravehouses. The coastal Tlingits, on the other hand, were still surrounded by their visual culture. They might

have lost a lot of their language, spiritualism and other culture factors, but they still had their longhouses, bentwood boxes, totem poles and other visually unique items. These items were powerful and represented a strong culture. If you were an Indian, then you might as well belong to the most well known and respected group, the Tlingits. This mentality still exists today, where many south-central Yukon First Nations people emphasise their Tlingit links. When I was growing up, the only 'Yukon' Indian art I saw was the Northwest Coast (NWC) Indian art style and even of those, there were only a couple of examples. The beadwork and the small animal carvings that the Athapaskans produced were considered craft rather than art.

When I started expressing an interest in doing an Indian style of art, my high school art teacher, Mr. Ted Harrison (who played a big role earlier in establishing NWC art as the Yukon Indian style and about whom I will discuss more in Chapter Nine-Trade Art & Current Period), directed me toward the NWC art style. This seemed right, because every other Yukon Indian artist was working in this style as well.

I was directed toward the Northwest Coast Indian art style because there was a total lack of early Yukon First Nations visual culture. When I thought about why there was such a lack of visual culture, especially since the Yukon was one of the last areas in North American to be explored and Yukon First Nations are among some of the last North American Natives to be assimilated into western culture, one would think that there were some visual remainders of that culture, but there were none. When I looked at the big picture I came up with a number of reasons for the lack of Yukon First Nations visual culture. One concerns the very nature of Yukon Athapaskans. There are a number of reasons why we shunned our culture and I will explain them below. Another factor was the lack of interest from the western culture's scholar and cultural community. I will provide explanations for that as well.

Yukon First Nations actions that lead to a lack of present day Visual Culture

One reason for the lack of Athapaskan visual images is the Yukon environment. Athapaskans lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle for survival and all the visual imagery was placed on the possessions they had with them. Those possessions had to be light and transportable, such as hide and small pieces of wood and bone. They were often small and had to be moved a lot. They also came in direct contact with the weather and thus deteriorated faster than the large permanent structures of the coastal Tlingits. Many of the items that illustrated Athapaskan artistic traditions could not stand the test of time and therefore could not be examined. Also, because of the smaller size, some items may have been easier to lose.

Another important reason for lack of cultural imagery was the very nature of Athapaskans: they had to be very adaptable to survive in the harsh Yukon environment. The Yukon is officially the coldest place in North America and the wildlife is sparse, requiring a bit over 100 square kilometers to support one person. When trade items began making their way into the Yukon interior in the 1800s, the Athapaskans began adopting those trade objects and discontinued the use of their own. Trapping a beaver and then trading the beaver for a set of clothing was a lot easier than hunting, skinning, tanning and sewing caribou or moose hide in order to have summer clothes. Around the turn of the twentieth century, when we were now almost living full time in houses and no longer on the land, we even stopped making the much superior winter hide clothing that was used for the cold winters. At the time of the first official exploration of the Yukon in 1883, much of the summer clothing used by the Athapaskan was already trade clothing. A reference to this was made by Dr. George Wilson, a member of the 1883 Lt. Schwatka expedition into the Yukon. He stated that well within Han territory, "whitemans clothing was "universally worn." (Schwatka 1900a:340 cited in Duncan, 1989, page 133). Further up the Yukon River whiteman's clothing was known and

used but not yet universally worn. Figure #1 shows a photograph of First Nations people trading at Lake Lebarge. This photograph is from a pamphlet entitled "Glimpses of Alaska: Klondike and Gold Fields" that was produced in 1897. The caption reads: "Trade scene with Stick Indians on Lake Lebarge, 1895". This photograph was taken before the Klondike Gold Rush and before any real influx of white people in this area. It appears that almost all First Nations in the photograph are wearing western clothing. This is in the same year that Jack Dalton built Dalton Post which was about 150 kilometers away. There were only two white men at that trading post. It is obvious that western clothing started coming into the southern region from the coastal Tlingits through trade and from the Forty Mile trading posts in the Klondike region close to the future Dawson City before the arrival of Dalton and others. While there were almost no white men in the southern Yukon region in 1895 there was a fairly large white population in the Forty Mile area, up to 600 people around 1894. They were all looking for gold or supporting/supplying the prospectors in their quest.

TRADING SCENE WITH STICK INDIANS ON LAKE LEBARGE. The Sticks are the most stalwart of the Upp

Figure #1, Lake Lebarge people (Southern Tutchone territory) trading in 1895 and already wearing western style clothing. PAM 1897-66C pg. 29, YA.

Along with the short lifespan of First Nations artifacts and decline of making traditional clothing and tools through trade, there were other causes that contributed to the scarcity of Yukon First Nations art. It was the traditional custom of burning items along with the cremated person. These items were needed by the deceased person on their journey into the spirit world. This could be extra clothing, button blankets, tools, hunting weapons, cooking items, etc. Robert McKennan in *The Upper Tanana Indians* writes in 1930:

> In former times the Indians burned their dead, but this practice has long since given way to burial. I found only one man who ever witnessed a cremation, and he had seen in when but a small boy. As he recalled it, the body was dressed in elaborately decorated clothes including mittens and cap. The fire bag with its stones and tinder was hung from the belt, and the knife in its beaded sheath was suspended from the neck, but no other weapons appear to have been included. The corpse was then placed

> on the pyre amidst the wailing of the relatives. When nothing remained but a few charred bones, two forked sticks were set up bearing a crosspiece between them, from which a few eagle feathers and beads were suspended immediately over the ashes. (McKennan 1959: 146)

As you can read from this account the person's most decorated clothing and his prized possessions, the firebag and his knife, were all cremated. These early practices would leave few examples of highly decorated artifacts to examine later.

A decade or two before Yukon First Nations encounter white people; Yukon First Nations people began burying people instead of cremating them. The reasons for the change are not clear and I discuss cremation and burial in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch and Death in greater detail. Yukon First Nations then adopted the ritual of placing those important items in the grave houses that were placed over top of the graves. Sadly, since the completion of the building of the Alaska Highway in 1942, First Nations grave houses were robbed of these cultural items by United States soldiers and later by tourists. This is described in *Part of the Land, Part of the Water*, which is Catharine McClellan's major ethnographic study of Southern Yukon First Nations:

> After burial became the rule, guns, metal tools, snowshoes, toys, dishes and cooking pots for the dead person were either put in the grave house or hung over the fence. Nobody was supposed to touch these things or take them away (...) When the Alaska Highway was built, the soldiers carried off most of what had been hanging on the grave fences for many years, and this was very distressing to the Indian people. (McClellan 1987: 214)

In order to prevent this, we changed the ritual to burying the items in the casket with the deceased person. However, by the time my people adopted this new practice almost all cultural artifacts that had been placed in the gravehouses were stolen. In was only in the late 1970s through the efforts of the Yukon Indian Woman's Association that Yukon First Nations graveyards ceased being tourist attractions and laws were created to keep tourists out of the graveyards.

Burial rituals also contributed to the scarcity of early Yukon button blankets through the ritual of intentionally tearing them at potlatches. I will be discussing potlatches later in this thesis but for now they are basically ritual celebrations conducted for various important events, including for the person who has passed away. An example is the ripping of button blankets in Fort Selkirk in 1914. This is remembered by Rachel Dawson in Cruikshank's *Reading Voices*:

> They do a dance, wear button blankets. They wore hats with lots of ribbons on them. Women had long hair (...) They took those hats off and put them on Wolf people's heads. Then they cut the button blankets in half and give them to wolf people. Just Wolf people get them. They give away Hudson Bay blankets too-tear them in half and give them to Wolf women, Wolf men-they all that. (Cruikshank 1991: 72)

This ritual is one of the reasons that the early Northern Tutchone style button blankets have not been preserved. If the style was different to the early Southern Tutchone button blankets then that style is lost and they are no longer made. I will discuss button blankets along with other related garments in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death.

This brings me to yet another reason for the lack of early Yukon First Nations visual culture: the dominant western culture's museum and scholarly practices.

Western Society's forces that contributed to a lack of present day Yukon First Nations Visual Culture

I have used many of western society's publications for my research and they have proven to be invaluable but at times have shed a negative and incorrect light of Yukon First Nations people. I will be discussing this further in the section. The other source of my research is based on examining museum collections but there are also issues with the museums. The first issue I will discuss concerns museums that have Yukon First Nations artifacts in their collections. These museums, locally, nationally and internationally, that have collected and exhibited Yukon First Nations artifacts have very poor documentation. In some cases there was no record of time or place of the collected artifacts. Information about the creator and meaning of the artifact is almost always missing. This has made it difficult to identify some artifacts as Yukon First Nations. In the case of most Yukon museums, many of the artifacts were collected from that area and one can assume that most were local in origin. An exception is the Old Log Church Museum whose collection comes from the whole northern area where their missionaries served. Documentation is also often lacking in all the Yukon Museums. This is not an intentional ploy but simply the lack of efficient collecting practices.

The next issue is that most of the examples of Yukon First Nations artifacts in museums are in storage, and therefore not in the public eye. I understand that most museums do not have the room to display all their collections but I also think that First Nations displays are not a priority. An example of this is the MacBride Museum in Whitehorse. It has a very large collection of Yukon First Nations artifacts, but a majority of the artifacts are in storage. Unfortunately for First Nations people, there is only a small First Nations display. The museum's display of early Whitehorse, minerals, animals, gold rush/mining and NWMP/RCMP displays are the priorities. The MacBride Museum was built in 1967, with the prevailing government attitude: the history of the Yukon began with the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898. The result is a greater emphasis on mining in the Yukon. Presently, the museum has chosen not to change the situation even when it has the resources to do so. Instead, they put their resources into the construction of more displays related to mining and white history of the Yukon.

While many museums are happy to allow students, researchers and First Nations people to examine their collections in storage there are some museums that are difficult to deal with. The access ranges from the very inviting to not having resources to accommodate researchers. I visited museums from Klukshu in the southern Yukon to St. Petersburg, Russia and almost all museums were welcoming. An example is from the time I was personally researching Tutchone art in 1992. I arrived unannounced at the door step of the Canadian Museum of Civilization and asked to see Tutchone artifacts. The staff invited me in and catered to all my needs. Another museum, while welcoming, had such bureaucracy in place that I had to inform the museum exactly what artifacts I wanted to examine before I arrived and than could only see those artifacts. A new request had to be placed in order to see more. There was no access to this museum's storage area which is often where the most interesting artifacts are hidden. There have also been a couple of museums that provided only the minimal information or seemed to barely tolerate my presence.

There is a general interest in present day Yukon First Nations art which is in the Northwest Coast Indian art style but an almost total disinterest in the traditional early Yukon First Nations art. There are many books about Northwest Coast Indian art, Inuit art, Alaskan art and so forth. Yet at the time of this writing in 2012 there is not a single book that focuses on the history of Yukon First Nations art. This lack of interest may have been fuelled by the early researchers of Yukon First Nations culture. These negative attitudes came from various

aspects of the white world: academic, spiritual, government and even artistic. The general opinion was that Yukon First Nations did not have an art tradition or if we did, it was somehow lacking. Going by "research" literature and popular writers, our art was often deemed crude and feeble. More than that, in the past our whole culture was at times described as crude and feeble! I was born in 1959 and experienced the tail end of some of these open attitudes toward myself and my people. We were lazy, stupid, dishonest, dirty and drunkards. Some of my experiences with this involve my time in school and later jobs. In fourth grade a student in my class stated that "Indians are not as smart as Whites!" The teacher, a modern-minded soul, decided to have a class debate. Half the class felt that Indians were less intelligent than white people and the other half felt that Indians could be just as intelligent as white people. Nobody thought that maybe Indians could be more intelligent than whites! There were times in school I was accused of cheating or stealing because I was the Indian in the class and could be easily blamed. Even later when I was serving in the Canadian Army and in Canada's elite unit, the former Canadian Airborne Regiment, I was often told that I was "doing good for an Indian!" Things have improved greatly since than but I can only imagine how much harsher these attitudes were before my time! Here are some examples of what has been written about Yukon First Nations art and culture:

> But our survey of the tribes in the Mackenzie and Yukon basins leaves us without any tangible picture. They lacked in outstanding features, devoid of those definite traits that reveal a distinct individuality. They lived precarious lives in harsh surroundings, and lacked the stamina and courage to rise above their environment and poverty. One day followed another in the dull monotony of pitching and breaking camp, always in search of game; and there were few ceremonies or dances to brighten their leisure hours. Perhaps they were the weaklings of their stock, as some writers believe, left behind in the north when their more enterprising kinsmen pushed southwest and south, to become the Sarcee of the plains, the allies of the Blackfoot, and the Carrier of other tribes in the interior of British Columbia. (E. Jenness 1966: 100-101)

This book, published in 1933 and republished in 1966, gives a bleak impression of Yukon First Nations. Eileen Jenness was the wife of well known ethnographer Diamond Jenness. It was with his notes that Eileen wrote *The Indian Tribes of Canada.* Because her book was smaller and an easier read it became more wide spread. I have come across some examples of Eileen Jenness' books in stores but have only ever been able to find Diamond Jenness' *Indians of Canada* in the Whitehorse Public Library. Understandably, the easy accessible books have a greater impact on the general public. Some of the more accurate publications done by museums and universities ended up with small book runs and were limited to a small circle of students, researchers and scholars. I started unofficial research in Yukon First Nations art as an interested artist in 1982 and I am still coming across publications by various universities and museums! These publications are not readily known or available. While there are positive and correct comments about Yukon First Nations in most of these scholarly publications they are amply balanced by negative and ignorant publications.

Next is a recent example that seems to repeat some of what E. Jenness wrote. They are a series of selected quotes from the former British Columbia Open University's History 120 (now Thompson Rivers University); Canadian History to 1867. This is a distance Education course and the content is passed on to the student through a series of 16 audiotape cassettes. These cassette tapes were produced in 1999 and I took this course in 2001. On the cassette tapes they are talking about the Athapaskan people of the Yukon and Northwest Territories:

> Some trading occurred but it hardly compared to what went on, on the coast. These northern tribes were more likely to steal each other's goods than to exchange them peacefully.
> Women in the Kutchin tribe killed female infants to spare them the degeneration that was the woman's lot in life.
> The dead weren't even buried, but left to rot in the open. This was very unusual. Among all other Canadian Natives, burial rites were very sacred ceremonies.
> …the livelihood of the Athapaskan tribes depended on following the wandering moose and caribou so they weren't able to create villages and lived on the very margin of survival. However we have to be cautious with generalizations, if we look at the arctic neighhours of the Athapaskan tribes we see that environment doesn't explain everything. (Open University 1999: Tape two)

Another early description of Yukon First Nations occurred during the first official exploration of the south-central Yukon. This exploration was conducted by the United States Army in 1883. The exploration was lead by Lt. Schwatka and he assessed the possible warlike nature of the interior Indians. Over the course of this thesis I will be showing some of Lt. Schwatka's comments about various groups of Yukon First Nations people he encountered. The first comment refers to the Tagish people where he learns that great herds of caribou cross at times. He is disappointed that they are not crossing when he is there and cannot kill some caribou for his group:

> Unfortunately for our party neither of these crossings occurred at this time of year, although a dejected camp of two Tahk-heesh families not far away from ours (No. 10) had a very ancient reindeer ham hanging in front of their brush tent, which, however, we did not care to buy. (Schwatka 1885: 109)

And more on Schwatka's general opinion about the 'Stick' (Tagish) people:

> The very few Indians living in this part of the country-the Sticks-subsist mostly on these animals and on mountain goats, with now and then a wandering moose, and more frequently a black bear. One would expect to find such followers of the chase the very hardiest of all Indians, in compliance with the rule that prevail in most countries, by which the hunter excels the fishermen, but this does not seem to be the case along this great river. Here, indeed, it appears that the further down the stream the Indian lives, and the more he subsists on fish, the hardier, the more robust, the more self-asserting and impudent the becomes. (Schwatka 1885: 109-110)

And one more of Lt. Schwatka's many comments about Yukon First Nations people:

> At Marsh a few miserable "Stick" Indians put in an appearance, but not a single thing could be obtained from them by our curiosity hunters.
> …A dirty group of children of assorted sizes completed the picture of one of the most dejected races of people on the face of the earth. (Schwatka 1885: 127-128)

See figure # 2 below of sketches done by Sgt. Gloster of "Stick" Indians at Marsh Lake to give you an idea of the people Lt. Schwatka was encountering.

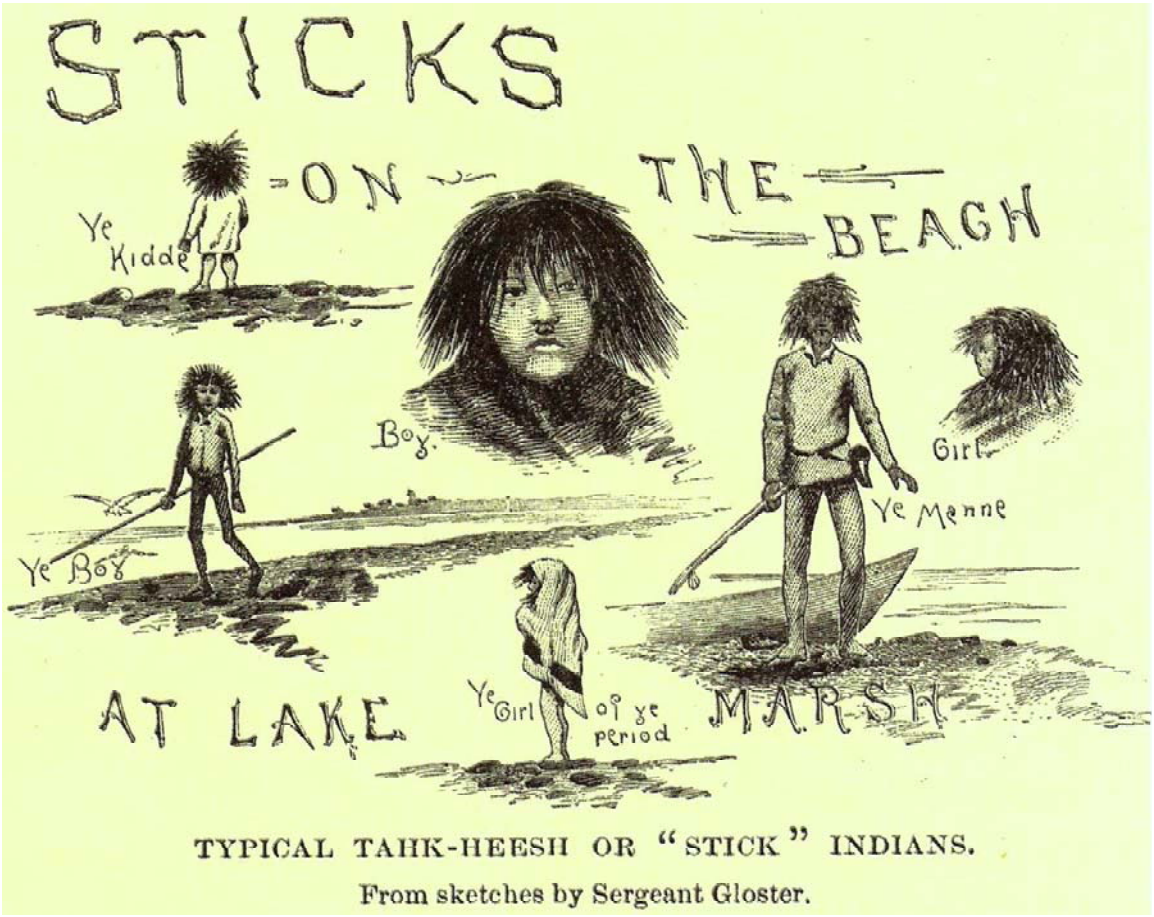

Figure # 2. Sticks on the beach by Sergeant Gloster, 1883. *Along Alaska's Great River*. Page 127.

Note that in the above image, the "Stick" Indians are not wearing the traditional hide clothing originally used, but what appears to be traded fabric clothing. There are at least two shirts and what appears to be a Hudson Bay Company blanket. The lack of trousers and other clothing may reflect a practice of not wearing much during the summer months. I would say that these people would still be using hide clothing during the winter months as the practice of making hide jackets carried on. There are a number of early southern Yukon hide jackets made in the early twentieth century in museums collections to support this idea.

In McClellan's *My Old People Say* she even includes a section titled "Hearsay Ethnography of Yukon Territory" on page three and "Early Accounts of the Southern Yukon Indians" on page four. She describes some of the early efforts to write about Yukon First Nations. When you read those sections you will see this early research is limited. Below are a couple of examples of McClellan's writings:

> Ethnographers have shown little accord in naming and locating native groups in southern Yukon. (McClellan 2001: 3)

And:

> But until the very end of the nineteen century, Schwatka and Dawson, who have been mentioned with their geographic explorations, and the journalist Glave (who later died while on Stanley's last African expedition) provide us with the only firsthand data about the Indians above Fort Selkirk. The short accounts leave much to be desired,

> although they are still basic. Schwatka and Dawson report rather briefly and impersonally on the Tagish and Inland Tlingit. (McClellan 2001: 4-5)

Other than what the Jenness wrote about Yukon First Nations people, there was very little written material available. The next easy accessible information was Catherine McClellan's *My Old People Say* published in 1975 which is overall a realistic portrait of the southern Yukon First Nations people.

Possibly, popular literature also played a role in disseminating negative ideas about Yukon Athapaskans. There are examples from the world famous writer Jack London. In his story *The Law of Life,* written in 1901, London tells the story of an old Yukon First Nations man from around the Dawson City area being left to the elements to die by his band as they pack up to move on to the next area. The idea of Yukon First Nations people leaving people to die or just leaving them in the open once they are dead is repeated later in Eileen Jenness' *The Indian tribes of Canada* which was published in 1933. Interestingly enough, Mrs. Jenness, as far as I could find, never visited the Yukon area. And in her acknowledgments she states:

> The author wishes also to acknowledge with thanks the assistance of her husband, Diamond Jenness, from whose volume "The Indians of Canada" she has derived her material… (E. Jenness 1966: Acknowledgment page.)

So she wrote this book based on her husband, Diamond Jenness' research. As far as Mr. Jenness is concerned, to the best of my knowledge he never visited the Yukon either. He was a member of the Southern Party of the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-1918 which was led by Dr. R.M. Anderson, to conduct the scientific research on the northern mainland. This research was limited to only 100 miles inland but he did not seem to come in contact with any Athapaskan people. Jenness' involvement ended in 1916 and therefore was not even part of the small group that traveled from the Mackenzie River to the Porcupine River and then on Fort Yukon and up the Yukon River to Dawson City in 1918. Was there any research done during the final leg of the exploration? It appears not. Diamond Jenness published his book *Indians of Canada* in 1932 and it only includes sections on the Tagish, Kutchin and Nahani people from the Yukon. He only writes about these three groups because he considered the Northern and Southern Tutchone, the Han and Tanana as part of the Kutchin. He has the Kaska and Goat people, which I believe are the Mountain Dene people, as part of the Nahani. While Jenness did good research with the British Columbia Athapaskans, it appears that he never did any field work with Yukon First Nations people. Instead he used what was already published to write his descriptions of the Yukon First Nations.

An example is when Jenness writes about the Chipewyan people based on Samuel Hearne's writing and states that "The aged and infirm of both sexes were abandoned by their companions and starved to death on the trail." And "They seldom covered their dead, but left them to be devoured by birds and animals. Families destroyed their property on the death of kinsmen, widows cut off their hair and went into mourning for a year, but otherwise widowers suffered no restrictions." (D. Jenness 1989: 386). It sounds quite bleak but how accurately did Jenness describe what he read and was Jenness even aware of the impact he was to have by presenting his version of the writing he was interpreting? I have read another interpretation of the same material from Edward Curtis and a different picture emerges; it is not as cold and blunt as in Jenness' description. While death was a fact of life in a harsh environment, there was caring and when left with no choice with a dying person. The situation was seen as sad but necessary. The people had to keep hunting so they themselves

did not starve and the person was reluctantly left behind with what food and supplies they could spare.

I tend to favour Curtis' accounts over Jenness' because it gives a wider description from Hearne's notes. In other sections of *Indians of Canada*, Jenness make statements similar to the above but about other Athapaskan peoples. I am left with doubt about Jenness' writings but his books were a major source of reference concerning Yukon First Nations until fairly recently when people like McClellan and Cruikshank began their research and a different picture emerged. The original Hearne and Mackenzie publications are not easy accessible. I had to go to Yukon Archives in order to read, in an older style English, Hearne's publication. I am therefore left with other authors' interpretations of these earlier works

From the spiritual side, following are comments about the Gwich'in by the first Church of England's missionaries. They first when down the Porcupine River and into Fort Yukon starting in 1861. The text is taken from *The Northern Yukon: A History* by Kenneth Coates:

> Some of the missionaries of the northern Yukon, for all their good intentions, held rather low opinions of their native charges, W.W. Kirby, on the occasion of his first visit to the area, referred to the Indians as "treacherous, savage and cruel." Bompas wrote, after visiting the area in 1873, that "These mountain Loucheux seem 'the lowest of all people' But I cannot help in hoping that they are a 'chosen race.' (Coates 1979: 54)

The lack of early accurate ethnographic work in the Yukon allowed for a lot of speculation and hear-say. London's *Law of Life* added to the idea that we were a ritual-less people. In London's story *The Wit of Porportuk,* written in 1906, we are portrayed as a lower status, dirty people. *The Wit of Porportuk* is about an Indian girl, El-soo, who is raised in the Holy Cross Mission along the Yukon River in Athapaskan territory around the Tanana River area. One day a man from her tribe arrives to tell her that her brother has died and she has to return to her camp to look after her old father who is the chief. This is what is written:

> She is appalled. He is dirty. He was a caliban-like creature, primitively ugly, with a mop of hair never combed. (London 1988: 90)

A caliban-like person is a character in Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* and generally thought of as a wild man, beast-man or a deformed man. El-soo is now a woman of status because she was raised in the mission and London shows that she is above the other Indian women:

> El-soo was a full-blooded Indian, yet she exceeded all the half-breed and quarter breed girls.

And further:

> She was the one Indian woman who was the social equal to the several white women at Tana-naw Station. She was the one Indian woman to whom white men honourably made proposals of marriage. And she was the one Indian woman whom no white man ever insulted. (London 1988: 90)

As you can see, London places Athapaskans below white man's social status and it even seemed common place to insult Indian people.

If you read Lt. Schwatka's in *Along Alaska's Great River* you will see that he makes a number of comments about Canada's first peoples. He felt that the coastal Indians, as well as the Eskimos, were a superior race to the southern Yukon Indian. Interestingly, all these commentators did not consider that Yukon First Nations lived in the coldest and one of the harshest environments in North America. In this kind of environment, preservation of energy is very important. One does not spend time making things other than what is practically useful. The simplest things in this case work the best. They take the least energy and are easily replaced or remade. Further, the white man was imposing his own ideas about how one was to live. The winter clothing that Athapaskans used was superior to anything white people had and I would say still have. The winter clothing consisted of two caribou hides, the inside hide with the fur facing inside and the outside hide with the fur facing outside. Twice the fur meant twice the insulation that a caribou in the wild had. In Edward Curtis' *The North America Indian* he writes about Mackenzie who talks about the Chipewyan:

> Says Mackenzie: "this dress is worn single or double, but always in the winter, with the hair within and without. Thus arrayed a Chepewyan will lay himself down on the ice in the middle of a lake, and repose in comfort; although he will sometimes find a difficulty in the morning to disencumber himself from the snow drifted on him during the night. (Curtis 1928: 49)

Imagine being able to do that today with our present clothing! Having a shelter that seemed inadequate really was not an issue to a person dressed in the manner stated above.

Maybe some of these academics, explorers and writers were comparing the required lifestyle of Yukon First Nations with the seemly noble, adventurous and romantic lifestyle of the Plains Indians or the more powerful, settled and wealthy Coastal Indians, with their great houses and totem poles. Even the Inuit were deemed resourceful because of living in what was considered a wasteland by the white people. Whatever compelled these men to judge Yukon Athapaskans in such patronizing and degrading manner, we did not fit the picture of the "romantic, noble savage".

I would like to add I did not go out looking for such as wide range of negative comments about Yukon First Nations people. I came across them when I was reading publications in my search of any form of Yukon First Nations art. After coming across so many negative statements I decided that these writings may have contributed to the overall attitude towards Yukon First Nations which in turn may have contributed to the lack of interest of Yukon First Nations art.

However, not all early explorers thought of Yukon First Nations as a backward people. It seems when the explorers needed the First Nations people they thought higher of them or maybe they were just more open minded. Take for example what the explore E.J Glave has to say about the Southern Tutchone during his exploration of the southern Yukon in 1890:

> "They are people of magnificent physique, tall, well-proportioned, and robust, with dark, tanned skin, black eyes, and hair…They are without exception the most peaceful people I have ever met in my life. They are never armed, and never an angry word is exchanged; they appear to be living on the best of terms together. They are lively and genial and full of fun; one does not see that sullen countenance and manner which is a peculiar characteristic of the other tribes." (Kirchhoff 2007: 40)

As the Tutchone were the first 'tribe' that Glave encountered in the Yukon, he must be referring to the various Tlingit groups as the 'other tribes'. Glave's tone about the southern Yukon First Nations people is in contrast to what others have written.

Another example is the Hudson Bay Company factor/explorer Robert Campbell. He had a very positive attitude toward the Yukon and northern British Columbia First Nations people he encountered during his time at the upper Stikine River, Fort Francis, Pelly Banks and Fort Selkirk between 1838 and 1852. While in the upper Stikine River area from 1838 onward until they left the area because of problems caused by the coastal Tlingit chief Shakes, it was the Tahltans that provided protection from the Tlingits. Campbell believes that had it not been for the power of a Tahltan Chieftainess the Tlingits would have killed his whole party. Later as Campbell established Fort Selkirk he was again dependent on interior First Nations protection. He writes about his first encounter in 1848:

> The Indians explained to us the best they could who the strangers were (they were Chilcats) & advised us to hide our working tools & everything movable unless we wished to have them stolen by the strangers who were adepts at pilfering. They also gave us a ready hand to put everything out of sight, which was hardly done, when the Chilcats arrived, about 20 in number & a hard looking set, on several rafts on which they drifted down the Lewes from near its source. We soon found out their thieving propensities, which were in such marked contrast to the honesty of the native Indians. These poor people, though so destitute of everything that a knife was looked upon by them as an invaluable treasure, were so thoroughly straightforward, that even if they found an article that was lost or mislaid, they would bring it back. (Wilson 1970: 97)

Note that what Campbell states about the stealing is in sharp contrast to that was written by Eileen and Diamond Jenness and what is spoken on the British Columbia Open University's History 120: Canadian History to 1867 tapes.

Comments directed toward Yukon First Nations art also had a negative tone. In Walter Hamilton's *The Yukon Story* which was first published in 1964 and had a third edition in 1972, he states:

> Efforts to get Indians to take up carving, even of miniature totem-poles, are now difficult. (W.R. Hamilton 1972: 189)

And back to Lt. Schwatka's comments about comparing the Tagish marmot snare sticks with Chilkat Tlingit marmot snare sticks:

> Sometimes they employ a little of their large amount of leisure time they have on their hands in cutting these pegs into fanciful and totemic designs, although in this respect the Sticks, as in every thing else pertaining to the savage arts, are usually much inferior to the Chilkats in these displays, and the illustrations give on page 112 are characteristic rather of the latter tribe than the former. (Schwatka 1885: 112-113)

Below in figure # 3 is the illustration of the marmot snare sticks that Schwatka is referring to.

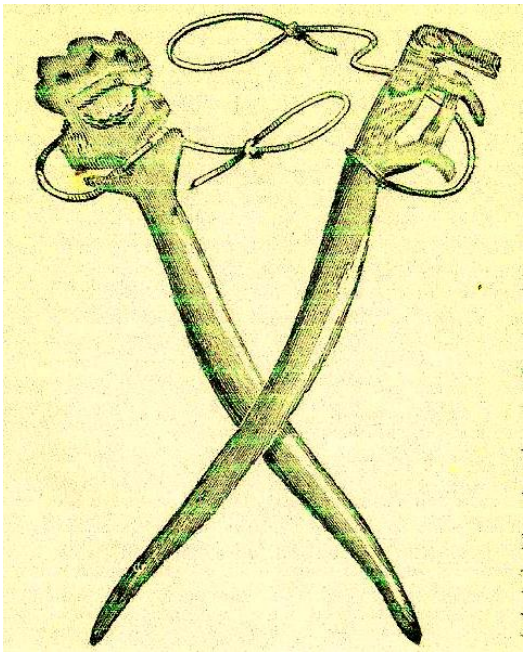

Figure # 3. Carved pins for fastening marmots snares. *Along Alaska's Great River*. Page 112

Douglas Leechman's (1890-1980) *Native Tribes of Canada,* which was first published in 1958, places the Yukon First Nations into the Northwest Territories area. In 1924 Leechman took a position in the Anthropology Division of the National Museum of Canada which lasted until 1955. He then became the director of the Glenbow Foundation and was thought of as Canada's First Conservation Scientist. Leechman wrote this book to target the younger reader. These writings plant the seeds into the young person's mind about the meagerness and lack of art of Northern Athapaskans. Here he describes the Mackenzie River Athapaskans in the section that is describing art for all Northern Athapaskans:

> ART
> The people of the Mackenzie River valley had developed only one form of art that was at all unusual. This was a kind of weaving in which they first made a simple strip of woven vegetable fibres or sinew and worked into it an intricate pattern of dyed porcupine quills. The weaving was so fine that it must have strained the woman's eyes in the poor light of their tents and there is so much work involved that few of them do it now. First the porcupines had to be killed, then the quills had to be pulled from the skin, washed and sorted into different lengths. Next the women would have to go out into the woods to collect dye plants, make the dyes, dye the quills, weave the base on which the work was to be done, and only then would they be able to begin the actual weaving of the pattern.
> Some of their clothes, and tools too, were painted but there was very little art of any kind other than the porcupine-quill work. Today they use beads for decorating moccasins and gloves, largely for sale to white men living there or to tourists. (Leechmen 1958: 222-223)

Even people with a generally positive outlook towards Yukon First Nations people felt our art to be generally inferior to the coast. In the following quote the writer even tries to make excuses for us:

> The magnificent woodworking of the coast tribes makes the efforts of their interior neighbours appear rather slight. However, most interior woods are crooked grained and the timber is relatively small. Nor did the semi-nomadic existence of the interior people foster the kinds of massive construction which interested the coast people. In actual techniques, both peoples had much in common. (C. McClellan 2001: 253)

I have given you some academic and popular literature examples that give an overall negative and quite incorrect view of Yukon First Nations people. The idea of lack of traditional Yukon First Nations arts still survives to present day. Recently I was told by an archaeology student in Whitehorse that Yukon First Nations people did not have any figurative art. Based on the limited material about Yukon First Nations art it makes sense that he, and the institute that he studies at, would come to this conclusion.

There have been more recent books, such as McClellan's *My Old People Say* and *Part of the Land, Part of the Water*, which are more accurate and realistic in the description of Yukon First Nations people. However, damage done by earlier writers and scholars has been quite evident.

Another reason for the lack of early Yukon First Nations artifacts was the poor efforts by the museum community in obtaining these artifacts. While early on under the leadership of the famous linguist Edward Sapir, an American who took the position as the director of the Anthropology Division of the Canadian Geological Survey of Canada, there were efforts to collect Athapaskan artifacts, the main focus of the collection was northern British Columbia and the Mackenzie River basin. The Anthropology Division of the Canadian Geological Survey of Canada was established in 1910. It later became the Museum of Man and in more recent years the Canadian Museum of Civilization. The result of Sapir's efforts was commissioning James Teit to collect Tahltan artifacts starting in 1912. There were also some Kaska artifacts collected during Teit's field work in northern British Columbia. At the same time artifacts were collected by Clement Lewis and Poole Field, who were living in the southern Yukon at that time. D.A. Cameron's collections from 1901 to 1908 went to the Royal Ontario Museum. While this was a good start, there were no serious collection efforts in the Yukon for almost half a century. Perhaps this is because Edward Sapir left the Anthropology Division and took a position at the University of Chicago in 1926 and the driving force was no longer there. After this long hiatus, the next serious collecting started with Catherine McClellan when she got funded by the National Museum in 1949. The result of this research is the excellent ethnographic survey of the southern Yukon: *My Old People Say.* Having said this, the work for *My Old People Say* started after World War Two, which I feel had the greatest impact in the assimilation of Yukon First Nations people and loss of our culture. There is furthermore the issue that after 1949 there was very little created in the traditional styles. World War two is the beginning of the cultural void that I call the Current Period.

With this inheritance of scant and poor early accurate research and lack of artifacts collected, one is left to ask: did Yukon First Nations people have any culture to speak of? Did we steal instead of trade? Did we leave our dead on the ground without any ceremonies? Were we the weaklings of our stock? Was our art far and few between and did we have any figurative art at all? Certainly, there was no art readily available to view and examine. There was nothing really to dispute the general opinion about the lack of our art.

This is the state of affairs I found myself in when I first began searching for clues about the Tutchone art style. I later expanded this search to include other Yukon Athapaskan peoples and the early Inland Tlingit styles. When my research became formal as part of my Masters of Art degree and my PhD in Indian American Studies, I first conducted a literature survey of the books written about Yukon First Nations. While there has never been a book

published that focused on the history of Yukon First Nations art, Kate Duncan's *Northern Athapaskan Art* was a good starting point. This book is a survey of all northern Athapaskan beadwork. I also used many ethnographic publications such as Catharine McClellan's *My Old People Say,* and *Part of the Land, Part of the Water;* Julie Cruikshank's *Life Lived like a Story & Reading Voices;* John Honigmann's *The Kaska Indians: An Ethnrographic Reconstruction* and Robert A. McKennan's *The Upper Tanana Indians.* The bibliography at the end of this thesis refers to other publications that I consulted.

My next step was to visit the museums in North America and Europe to examine any possible Yukon First Nations artifacts in their collections. As the subarctic or Athapaskan collections were small, I felt I had to follow up every lead and visit any museum that could have artifacts from, or be related to, Yukon First Nations. This resulted in over forty museum visits in over fifteen countries. Some museums had large collections such as the Canadian Museum of Civilization where I examined over a hundred artifacts. Other museums I visited had only a couple to no artifacts. I estimate that I physically examined about 750 artifacts during these museum visits. While visiting museums and archives I viewed thousands of historical photographs in search of any early First Nations imagery. As there were no political borders before the coming of the white man I did not take these into account. I included all those groups of people whose traditional territory cross the present day Yukon borders as well as some of the neighbouring people, even though they are totally outside the present day Yukon borders. My research also included my notes from previous private research and personal communications with Elders. Although the Inland Tlingit are not part of the Athapaskan peoples, I have included them in this paper. They were living in the same environment as the Athapaskans and their early art style was in some cases almost identical to the Athapaskan styles. This thesis is the result of my search for early Tutchone, Athapaskan and Inland Tlingit art styles from the Yukon region and surrounding areas.

Notes on Collections and Collectors

Because of the isolation of the south-central Yukon there were no artifacts collected directly from this area until after the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898. The artifacts from the south-central Yukon that were collected before the Klondike Gold Rush were collected indirectly from either the coastal Tlingits through their trading activities with the people of the south-central Yukon or from Fort Yukon in Alaska. Understandably, the artifacts collected from the Tlingits are sometimes mistakenly identified as Tlingit in origin. Artifacts from the northern Yukon were often collected by the Hudson Bay Company and the provenance for these artifacts is better. There was also a group of amateur and professional collectors that dealt in early Native American artifacts. One collector I came across about a dozen times while researching Athapaskan collections in both North America and Europe was a German collector/dealer named Arthur Speyer. In fact there were three Speyer's, father, son and grandson. The first of the three Arthur Speyer's was born in 1858 and passed away in 1923. The second, the first Speyer's son, was born in 1894 and passed away in 1958. The grandson was born in 1922. The Speyers collected many artifacts from other dealers, collectors, museums and even nobility from around the world. Some of these artifacts came from the North American subarctic region. Tracing the acquisition of these artifacts has not been easy. William C. Sturtevant describes his efforts in his paper titled *Documenting the Speyer Collection* which was published as part of *Studies in American Indian Art: A Memorial Tribute to Norman Feder* that was edited by Christian F. Feest. Museum personnel recorded the date and collector of each artifact (in this case Speyer) and the notes the collector contributed. While Speyer did add notes about the artifacts he sold to museums, these notes were not verified and this resulted in some curators questioning the accuracy of what Speyer

wrote. Some notes show where Speyer obtained the artifacts, but they tell nothing about the specifics of the artifact or the origin or who all owned the artifacts at various times. An example is a number of items of Athapaskan hide clothing that Speyer sold to museums which were obtained from the third Battalion, 69th Infantry from Harburg, Germany. There are two Harburgs in Germany and it seems that Speyer is referring to what is now the Hamburg-Harburg area. The 69th Regiment was stationed in Trier, which is in western Germany along the French border and not close to either Harburg. So besides not being clear about where the artifacts were obtained, it leaves no clue as to how early subarctic hide clothing that could be from the Yukon ended up in the German 69th Infantry Regiment.

In other cases an amateur collector would amass a collection and then pass away. Sometimes these collections were then donated to museums by the widow and at times came with little or no information about where and when the artifacts were collected. An example is the amateur collector E.E. Stockton who was a federal civil servant working in Dawson City between 1901 and 1906 and while there collected Han artifacts. When he passed away his widow donated materials to the Museum of Man (now Canadian Museum of Civilization) in 1944. This and other collections lack detailed documentation, especially when the collector lived in various areas in North America and collected from each area. The Anglican Old Log Church Museum in Whitehorse has many artifacts collected by its early missionaries, but lacked the records of where the artifacts were collected. Their collection ranges from all across the north of the Yukon, Alaska, Northwest Territories and the Inuit territory. An example of an Anglican Church collector is Bishop Isaac O. Stringer, who served all across the subarctic as well as the arctic beginning in 1892 and later was Bishop of the Yukon from 1905 until 1931. He collected a lot of artifacts but he rarely recorded where and when he collected them. Neither did he add any other notes as to the purpose or meaning of the artifacts. And again, his collection was later donated by his widow.

Bigger institutions like the Canadian Museum of Civilization often have more information but still can lack in the details about the creator or meaning of the item. For example, D. D. Cairnes collected many Yukon First Nations items for the National Museum of Canada, Ethnology Division (now Canadian Museum of Civilization). He purchased some of the items at the Taylor and Drury store in Whitehorse during the summer of 1911. The information he received was from the sales clerks. While he may have been told where the item came from and given other information such as its supposed use, he often did not record who made the item or the meaning of the imagery.

In the cases where I have visited a local Yukon museum I have assumed that the artifacts were of local origin. These museums collected artifacts from the local area. While there may be cases of some artifacts coming from other areas I believe this is rare. People would have donated to their local museum or historical society. For all Klukshu and Kluane Museum of Natural History (KMNH) artifacts, I have assumed the items to be Southern Tutchone, unless otherwise noted. All Dawson City Museum (DCM) artifacts I have assumed to be Han, unless otherwise noted. The MacBride Museum is a mixture of mostly Northern and Southern Tutchone, Tagish and Inland Tlingit artifacts, but other groups may be represented. The images I used from the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) are mainly Han artifacts from the D.A. Cameron Collection who collected many artifacts from the Dawson City area.

One collection that has a clear Yukon origin is the Ice Patch Collection (IPC). These artifacts were found in 1997 in the southern Yukon mountains as the ice patches at the tops were melting because of global warming. Since 1997 hundreds of artifacts have been recovered from the melting ice patches. These artifacts were discovered in the southern Yukon and are owned by the three First Nations in the area; Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. The artifacts are

stored at the Yukon Government's Heritage Branch and cared for by the archaeology staff. There are many partners involved in the research and care of these artifacts and they are collectively called the Ice Patch Research Group.

While further research is required in identifying many artifacts in museum collections, I think this thesis enhances the understanding of the art history of the Yukon and the surrounding region. It is my hope that this thesis will be useful to other researchers and interested people and will foster a better understanding of the Yukon's original art style.

Confusing Identifications

As will have become clear by now, there are no large nineteen century collections of Yukon First Nations artifacts with good provenance; not enough information to be able to easily identify what artifacts came from which Yukon First Nation. This is further made difficult by another issue relating to research of the early art: confusing identifications. For instance, an artifact might be identified as coming from a certain group, but is questionable or clearly incorrect. Sometimes an item has been given an earlier, obscure identification and it is unclear from who it was collected. During my research I have come across a number of artifacts that have been identified as coming from groups I have never heard of before. In that case I had to ask the curator of the museum to show those groups on a map. Luckily, this would mostly give clarification.

The overall similarity of styles that the Athapaskan worked in has also resulted in confusions of identification. Hide Tunics, daggers, gopher skinning knives and bone arm bands are just some of the items that have a similar general pattern. For example, some hide tunics that may not be Gwich'in are identified as Kutchin (Gwich'in) because they have the same outline as the Gwich'in tunics. Gwich'in tunics seem to be one of the most common tunics in museum collections and therefore curators often identify similar tunics as Gwich'in. Tunic patterns are similar from Northern British Columbia, up into the interior of Alaska and across to the western part of the Northwest Territories. So identifying a tunic solely based on its outline could lead to errors. One has to look at the details in order to get a better sense of the origin of the tunic. See figure # 62D on page 91 for an example of a tunic that is identified as Kutchin based on the pattern. When I examine the details, especially the breastband style, it looks more southern Yukon than northern Yukon. This tunic was donated to the Pitt River Museum in Oxford in 1884. The location or date of collection is unknown. Later in Chapter Two I explain regional breastband styles, where my point about regional tunic styles will become clearer.

The misidentification of various artifacts can maybe be explained by the situation of scholars, curators and other people who are in positions that allow them to make identifications but who might have limited knowledge about specific subarctic cultures and artifacts. After all, the subarctic covers a vast area. When they do identify an artifact from a certain area it often goes unquestioned because of the lack of research material to compare for accuracy. Another issue is the lack of large subarctic collections in the various museums in North America and Europe. This might have resulted in a shortage of dedicated subarctic curators or professors. Only few people have been interested in exploring Yukon First Nation history and art, which has been dwarfed by the ubiquitous and popular imagery of the Northwest coast and the adventurous and exploding history of the Gold Rush**.**

Figure # 4**,** map of Yukon First Nations peoples. Yukon Native Language Centre.

Additional cultural group naming confusion came from such events as early explorer William Dall's visit to Fort Yukon in Alaska in 1867. While he was there, he identified a number of Native American/First Nations tribes:

> Other tribes present for the trading Dall identified as "the *Natche Kutchin,* or Gens de Large, from north of the Porcupine River, the *Vunta Kutchin,* or Rat Indians, from farther up the Porcupine; the *Han Kutchin* (Wood people), or Gens de Bois, from the Yukon, above Fort Yukon, above Fort Yukon; and finally, the *Tutchone Kutchin* (crow people) or Gens de Foux, from still farther up the Yukon. (Wright 1976: 110)

Compared to the Yukon Native Languages map above, Dall's identifications are quite different from what is accepted today. You will notice that Dall lists all the groups as "Kutchin". This is incorrect and leads to confusion about the traditional territory that the Kutchin (Gwich'in) inhabit. Dall also indentifies the Tutchone Kutchin as the Crow people. I suspect that he met the members of the Crow Clan of the group of the Northern Tutchone people who visited Fort Yukon. Traditionally, we did not identify ourselves with a tribe. We lived in bands in a certain area. We would say in what area we mostly lived and what clan we belonged to, for instance, Crow people from Fort Selkirk area. I am from the Whitehorse people and the Wolf clan. At other times various other people have been deemed to be from the Crow tribe. There are many items in collections that are listed from the Crow tribe from the South-central Yukon, mainly from the Tagish and Inland Tlingit people and, as we have seen, also the Tutchone. In reality they are members of the Crow moiety and thus can be from any of these groups. The confusion about Yukon First Nations people is furthered by those publications that identify almost all Yukon First Nations as simply Kutchin. For example, in Hamilton's *The Yukon Story* he states:

> The Yukon Indian Agency estimated the Indian population of the Territory at about 1600 in 1954, roughly divided into two main tribes, the Tlingits, or Tlingits of the Coast and known near Lynn Canal as the Chilkoots or Chilkats, and the Dené or Athapascans of the Interior. The Dené people comprise two main groups, the Loucheux of the Peel and Porcupine Rivers, settled chiefly around Old Crow on the bend of the Porcupine, and the Kutchin or Wood Indians occupying the drainage basin of the upper Yukon River. (Hamilton 1972: 188)

Confusion was added with Lt. Schwatka's 1883 exploration throughout the Yukon. He identified the First Nations Tagish people he met at Marsh Lake as Tahk-heesh or "Stick" Indians. As he travelled down the Yukon River he further identified the Northern Tutchone people as Ayan Indians. And I have already mentioned that Jenness' lumped together the Northern and Southern Tutchone as well as the Han and Tanana people with the Kutchin people. He also identified the Kaska and the Goat (Mountain Dene) as the Nahani people.

These are but some examples of the many cases of misidentification as well as older, no longer used identifications of Yukon First Nations in publications. Some of these publications are recent. Hamilton's *The Yukon* Story was first published in 1964 and reprinted many times, with a third edition in 1972. Hamilton identifies the Loucheux as a different group from the Kutchin when in fact they are terms used for the same people, the present day self-identified Gwich'in. Hamilton also states there are two main tribes and this makes me question what happened to the other Yukon First Nations groups. One of the publications that list most but not all other past identifications of Yukon First Nations is *The Romance of Canadian History, Canada III: The Uncharted Nations.* In that volume, starting on page 81, *The Northern Athapascans*, is a list of each Athapascan group and a list of names they were also called.

In the course of my research I have come across many different labels of the Native American people of northwestern North America and, although confusing, feel that all these identifiers have to be maintained. Changing names would only add to the confusion and would make the work of future researchers more difficult. I have therefore used the original identification of the group and put in brackets the current identification. Even today some terms can create confusion. In Canada the aboriginal people are made up of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. When I use the term 'First Nations people', I am referring to Canadian Native Americans. When I use the term "a First Nation" or "that First Nation", I am referring to the 'band' or government of that group of people. In the United States the two groups of aboriginal peoples are the Native Americans and the Eskimo-Aleut. When a present day group uses its own self identification, I use that name. For example, the Gwich'in or Gwitch'in people have in the past been identified as Kutchin, Louchoux and Tukudh. So when the artifact is identified as Kutchin, I will write it as Kutchin (Gwich'in) for the first time in the section about that artifact. After that I will continue to refer to it as it was originally identified. In those cases when an artifact is identified from a First Nation group that obviously did not make it, such as an Athapaskan artifact that was traded to the Tlingits and then identified as Tlingit, I will comment on each one in a case by case situation.

Below is a brief table of Yukon First Nations peoples in and the various names that have been used to identify us. This is not a complete list but shows the most common names used. I have not included many of the groups neighbouring the Yukon in the below list but will write about them as I get to them in this dissertation. I will list the Yukon Athapaskan groups in the same order as shown in figure # 4 and after add some groups not included in the map.

Gwich'in (also Gwitch'in):	Kutchin, Loucheux, Gens de Large, Rat Indians, Tukudh, Takudh.
Hän:	Han Kutchin, Hankootchin, Wood people, Gens de Bois, Ai-yan, Ayonais.
Upper Tanana:	Tanana, Nabesna, Tannin-Kootchin, Tanna-Kutchín, Gens de Buttes.
Northern Tutchone:	Tutchone, Tutchone-Kutchin. Crow people, Gens de Foux, Gens de Bois, Wood Indians, Mountain Indians, Caribou Indians, Nehaunnes, A-yan, Ai-yan, and Gunana by the coastal Tlingits.
Southern Tutchone:	Tutchone, Stick Indians, Tinne and Gunana by the coastal Tlingits.
Kaska:	Goat, Nahane, Nahani, Nahanni, Tichotina.
Tagish:	Stick Indians, Tag Indians, Tahk-heesh, Tahkeesh, Tagisch, and Gunana by the coastal Tlingits.
Tahltan:	Thalhthan, Toltan, Tičaxhanoté·n, Taku People, Nahane, and Gunana by the coastal Tlingits.
Inland Tlingit:	Taku People, Takutine, Tāh′ko-tin′neh, Nahane, and Gunana by the coastal Tlingits.
Mountain Dene:	Mountain Indians, Nahani, Goat, Shi-ta-dene, Gens des Montagnes.

Note that some of the groups of people fell under one identifying name: Northern Tutchone, Kaska, Tahltan and Mountain Dene were all at one time identified as Nahane. The coastal Tlingit called everybody in the interior Gunana. The point is that early identification of Yukon and surrounding peoples overlapped and was rather haphazard.

What is Yukon First Nations 'Art'?

There is no direct translation for the word 'art' or 'artist' in Yukon First Nations languages. The word 'art' in the western meaning did not exist in our culture. Yet artistic creativity existed. What forms did this artistic creativity take? In Southern Tutchone the word used for art is pronounced as Kris-eea. That word means "fix things" and also the "person who fixes things". So the word is used for art and artist. In Northern Tutchone the word Hutsi means to make something and Dän Hutsi is a person who makes something. So how is the modern reader to understand this? When a person is making a tool, clothing, or other item, they are 'making' or 'fixing' it. The item is not complete until all parts are finished and that often includes the decoration or art. Therefore, when we look at Yukon First Nations art, we have to look at the context in which it was produced. Most of the time, the aesthetic part ("making it fancy") was integrated in the practical object, most likely executed towards the end. The artist, or fixer, was a handy-(wo)man and decorator in one, the two aspects together making up the art. Even objects made by shamans had their practical aspects, as possibly were little talisman figures for the hunter or warrior. Early Yukon First Nations art remained with the person as a tool or other functional object. This object was often also pleasing to look at and sometimes had varied depths of meaning. This meaning depended on the object itself, the owner and the rituals it was used for. In figure # 5 you will see a drum with a complex stick figure as well as a series of other designs such as the zigzag lines.

Figure # 5. Tutchone hand games drum collected at Ross River in 1913. VI-Q-39, CMC.

This image should not be seen as the image complete in and of itself, but as part of a bigger picture. The image has its own story, it says something. Unfortunately, the story of the image is now lost forever. But we can carefully speculate. For example, this image is on a drum that creates a rhythm. Since this drum has a strand of sinew across the top (it originally had two strands), it was made for hand games (also called stick gambling). The drum was played using a quick double-beat to create the rhythm during the games. So that image is part of a competitive event that would involve the whole community. Traditionally, objects had "power", especially items that were used during community events like the hand games. In this case, the drum should be seen as a participant in the games! A good illustration of a drum being part of the event is with Upper Tanana Elder Walter Northway. He is an Upper Tanana Native American and was born in the 1870s. In June 1971 Northway was helping celebrate a 5 day potlatch in Northway and this is what happened when he was asked to sign the guestbook:

> On the last day of the potlatch someone passed around a guest book for everyone to sign. When the book came to Chief Northway, he held up his painted drum. "This is my sign," he declared. "When you see this drum, you know I am here. I don't need to write my name." (Alaska Native Language Center 1987: Page ix)

So the drum was but one aspect of the bigger event or "cultural scene". The process of the making of the drum, gathering the material, the rhythm, the song, the story, the dance, the food, all were more literally the "visual culture in progress". This is actually less removed than you might think from traditional Western art, where the artist had to be involved in the process of making the paints and preparing the panels and where the religious knowledge and ritual depicted in the art work was intimately lived by the artist and community alike.

To come back to the drum; the animal, in this case a caribou, was hunted and that animal gave itself to the hunter. The hide was tanned and the use of that hide had to be decided. Once the ideal piece of hide was selected it went to the drum maker (most likely the

hunter and the fixer/maker) who then had to gather the wood for the frame and construct the drum. He had to decide on an image to put on the drum and then had to gather the pigment to make the paint. In this case red ochre, the preferred paint used by Yukon Athapaskans. The artist would have had to travel to a red ochre pit and gather the ochre. He gave his thanks and left an offering at that pit. In the recent past tobacco was left. The ochre now had to be ground and then burnt. After this the powder was stored in a bag used for that specific purpose. See figure # 6 for an example of an ochre bag. This bag was collected by Clement Lewis at Teslin Lake and arrived at the National Museum of Canada, Ethnology Division (now Canadian Museum of Civilization) in December 1912. Coming from Teslin Lake would most likely make this bag an Inland Tlingit creation. The bag has geometric style beadwork on it which was at times used by the Inland Tlingits.

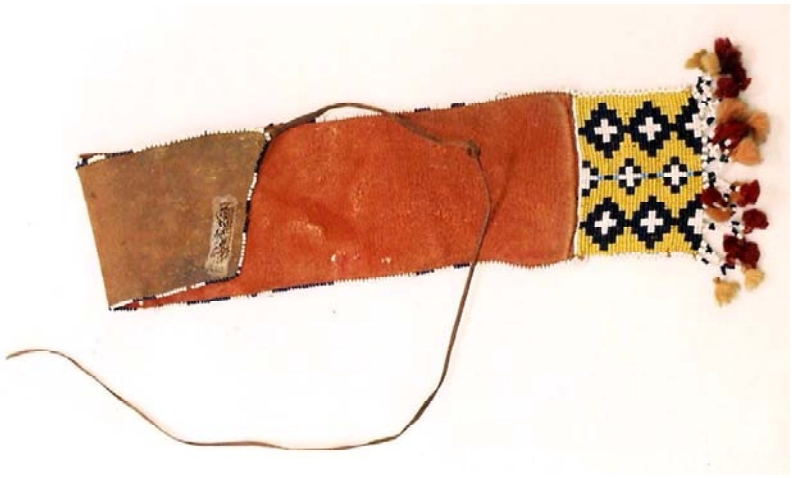

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Figure # 6. Athapaskan ochre bag. , VI-J-30, CMC.

The powder was mixed with a binding substance such as animal oil. Once the artist decided on the image, he would create it in his own style and thus the image would often only be understood by himself and maybe even those people around him. After the image was completed and used, it would have a meaning for the artist. The people around him most likely also learned its meaning, especially when they took part in those stick gambling games and events where that drum was played. The people beyond his band may not have understood what the image was about, but would have realized that it was important.

In the above case I have only been describing a stick gambling drum. A shaman's drum or a potlatch drum would be viewed in a different context. For example a potlatch drum played to sing a good-bye song for the deceased person would be a sad event while a shaman's drum used in a healing ritual would have been a hopeful event.

Athapaskans always created different images. The viewer may not have understood what the image was about unless the artist chose to explain it. Maybe the image had a deep personal or spiritual meaning, not privy to others. This is why today, when I show Elders photographs of various images, they most often say they do not know what the image means and will not venture a guess.

Concerning the art of my people, many images have lost their meaning and have nothing written about them. This makes research challenging. For example, in the case of the Tutchone drum discussed above, not a single Elder offered an explanation as to its meaning as they were not present when it was made or used. Neither did they know the maker. In my culture it is not proper to just guess. In doing my research and writing this paper, I have no choice but to divert from my people's habit of only speaking about what they know for sure.

When I am not sure about certain imagery, I will make suggestions to possible meaning or I link the image to what I believe is a related story or event.

Now that I have dealt with some issues surrounding my research I will move on to my findings. With the use of local Elder's knowledge, historical photographs, previously published material and my own analysis of artefacts I have worked at giving the big picture of Yukon First Nations art which is what follows next.

CHAPTER ONE: Cultural & Environmental Background, Art Periods and Comparative Art Styles

In this chapter I will give a short environmental and cultural background which includes some of our spiritual beliefs, our place in this human world and other worlds, and our relationship with animals. I will discuss enough ethnology of the early Yukon peoples for the reader to have a basic understanding of the cultural situation from which our art form developed. I would also like the reader to keep in mind that there are slightly different versions of rituals, stories and lifestyles over the whole area so the following descriptions are intended as a basic overview. There are many good books that provide greater detail about our cultures. One book I can recommend for the southern Yukon is Catharine McClellan's *My Old People Say*.

I will further write about the early images and break down the art into three art 'periods': Geometric, Beaded and Current. I will discuss some of the differences between the Northwest Coast Indian art and early Yukon First Nations art, as well as differences between Coastal Tlingit and early Inland Tlingit art.

I also want to point out that this dissertation is a general overview of the art from the Cordillera region (explanation below) of the western arctic and as such does not focus totally on any particular group. I do of course write about groups within regions and sometimes about the details of a group. Each First Nation will have to create their own publication about their people's unique art but this dissertation can be a good reference to provide an overview and also to locate their art in relation to other First Nations groups.

Brief Background of Yukon First Nations' World

The world of Yukon First Nations falls into different identifying areas. Yukon First Nations people live in the western Sub-arctic which is one of the harshest environments in North America.

. The *Handbook of the American Indian: Volume Six Subarctic* indentifies the western Subarctic as the interior of Alaska, the Cordillera and the western Mackenzie District. It is on the art made by people in the western Subarctic that my research is focused. The Yukon itself is fully within Cordillera and the *Handbook of the American Indian: Volume Six Subarctic* indentifies Cordillera as: the area includes the northern half of interior British Columbia, the western edge of northern Alberta and the District of Mackenzie, all of Yukon Territory, and much of northwestern interior Alaska. (Helm 1981:372)

As there were no borders before the coming of the white man I sometimes will use these geological terms. As mentioned in the introduction the Yukon is the coldest place in North America and the wildlife is quite sparse. This resulted in the people having to live a semi-nomadic lifestyle. The summers were spent at fish camps where people netted fish and dried them for caching for the winter months. The harvest from hunting and berry picking was also added to those caches. The caching of food was very important since there was a scarcity of resources over the winter and it required about 110 square kilometers of land to support one person. This scarcity of resources allowed only small groups of people to live over a wide area. Generally, there were not more than 30 people in a band. In the early fall, when it was no longer possible to gather berries, the ground was too frozen to dig for roots and, most importantly, it was no longer possible to net fish. At his time, the band would pack up and move to their hunting areas. The fish camp tools and items not needed for the winter were cached at the camp, ready to be used upon return. The people lived a nomadic life, following and hunting the caribou and/or moose. When there was a shortage of food, the people would return to the caches. In this type of small-band lifestyle the leader was the

person who knew best about a particular situation. In this scenario there could be a different leader for all the various situations such as a hunting, trading, war, fish netting and so forth. Generally, the men would be responsible for hunting the big game while the women hunted for smaller animals such as rabbits. Women also tended to manage the day to day affairs at the camp. There was a strong sense of cooperation and there was a general attitude of non-confrontation, preferring to let bothersome or offensive people go rather than confront them.

The band was like a family who you spent most of your time with. Because of the small bands each person was quite important. This individuality had a major effect on the art produced by the Athapaskan people. Adulthood was marked by the first menstruation and completion of the resulting seclusion ritual for girls and the killing of the first large game animal for the boys. There may also have been a spirit guide quest into the wilderness, taken by the boy to obtain a guardian spirit. In this harsh environment a person had more chance of survival when one had a partner, so it was always important to have a spouse. When people reached adulthood they married. Sometimes, a young person married an older person. Often the marriages were arranged and it was not unusual that in the case of a spouse passing away, the next available sibling of the deceased would become the new spouse. Men could have more than one wife and women could have more than one husband. The marriage was always between people from different moieties called clans. There are two clans in the south-central Yukon, the Wolf and Crow clans, while the north-central Yukon has a third 'middle' clan. The clan system played an important part in Yukon First Nations society. When a couple married the husband generally lived with the wife's family for the first year before settling on their own. This allowed the husband to help the father in law hunting and thus learning about that family's area. This increased the husband's knowledge of resources. The clan system also allowed people to have 'relatives' throughout the region and if they were in a new area the clan members there would assist them. In the north-central Yukon, the third clan is for those people who are outsiders, such as a First Nation person from far away with a different or no clan, or more recent, for white people who married into the group. In the case of the southern Yukon a person marrying in from the outside, and not having a clan, would assume the opposite clan to their spouse.

Yukon First Nations trace their family roots through their mothers, taking her clan and tribe. The bond through the clan was stronger than through marriage. An example is the case of Àkhjìyis (Marge Jackson's spelling of Ukjese in her Story of Àkhjìyis in Kwädāy Kwändūr) killing his brother in law. Àkhjìyis' brother in law went hunting on Àkhjìyis' game mountain without permission and before Àkhjìyis himself got up the mountain. So when Àkhjìyis went up hunting on the mountain and discovered his brother in law already there he got very angry and killed him. When Àkhjìyis' son discovered that his father had killed his uncle, the son wanted to kill Àkhjìyis for retribution for killing a member of his clan. As it turns out the son did not kill Àkhjìyis but the Crow Clan confronted Àkhjìyis about the murder he committed and the required retribution. In order to not have to give his life in payment Àkhjìyis gave his game mountain as well as the salmon rich creek of Klukshu to the Crow Clan. At the present time, when a member of the Wolf Clan wants to fish at Klukshu, he must ask permission from the Crow Clan. Any Crow Clan member present can grant permission.

In the Yukon clan system First Nations people can marry their first cousins as long as they are from the opposite clan. That would be their cross cousin. Because of the clan system we cannot marry our parallel cousins. The cross cousins are the children of the mother's brother and the mother's brother's children would be from the clan of his wife. The parallel cousins are children of the mother's sister who would be the same clan because the clan follows the female, in this case the aunt. In this system the male parallel cousins are considered brothers and the female parallel cousins are considered sisters. An example is the

case of well known Elder Annie Ned, my great grandmother who was married to Patty Smith. Patty Smith's mother's sister had a son named Johnny Ned and because he was Patty Smith's parallel cousin, was considered his brother. When Patty Smith passed away, the next available brother became the next spouse for Annie Ned. In this case it was Patty's 'brother' Johnny Ned. Our language reflects these more complex family relationships. There are for instance different words for the aunt or uncle from the mother's side and from the father's side.

Interestingly, clan imagery played a big part in both Tagish and Inland Tlingit art but not so in the rest of Yukon Athapaskan art.

In order to understand any culture's art one has to understand that culture's spirituality and history. Our history comes from our stories since we have an oral tradition. Our belief system is technically described as animism, believing that natural objects have souls. My people believed that everything had a force. Many of us still believe in a Spirit World and in the ancient times we believed in a number of other worlds. A Shaman's spirit guides provided him or her with a connection from this world to the Spirit and Animal Worlds. Shamans were most often males but sometimes females. The Spirit world's day was our world's night.

We believed in reincarnation: after we pass away and enter the Spirit world we can be reborn. This belief is still wide spread today, even though most people have adopted Christianity as their religion. The apparent contradiction of Christianity preaching one life and one soul that is judged on judgment day, and our belief of many lives because of our reincarnations, is not an issue for us. Some people believe they recognize in a child a person who is reborn, especially when they see distinct traits that the previous person had. My Great-grandmother Annie Ned believed I was a reincarnation of her second husband, Johnny Ned. His Indian name was Aaxdzeez (Marge Jackson uses Àkhjìyis, I use Ukjese). As a child Annie Ned watched me and then one day she exclaimed: "That is Johnny Ned, that is Aaxdzeez !" and from then on I was known to my family as Ukjese and have been considered the reincarnation of Johnny Ned.

We believe we are reborn as a human, either male or female. A person could remember parts of their past life only as a young child, until about the age of five or six years old. After that, children lose their memories of that life, but could still retain special skills from their past life. People did not come back as animals or other entities, because those belonged to different worlds. But people could be taken into another world. When a person was taken into the Animal World, she could not tell the difference between her own Human World and the Animal World. One reason was that humans and animals spoke the same language. Because they all understood each other, people were guarded about speaking out loud about certain things, because the animals they were talking about could hear the conversation. For example, one did not say "I am going to hunt moose today!" because the moose would hear the person and the hunt would be unsuccessful. Humans could not enter the Animal World by themselves but were taken there by an animal. Sometimes this happened because the person was disrespectful towards those animals, or sometimes the human followed an attractive person who turned out to be an animal in human form. Those people who followed ended up marrying the animal. These themes occur in many stories and often the return to the Human World resulted in a deeper understanding of the animals. The returned person would teach the people how to behave with those animals. If a person was taken to the Animal World, the only way she could get back to the Human World was through the assistance of those animals the human has taken the form of, or from a shaman. When a person entered the Animal World all her clothes fell off, so upon return to the Human World she was naked. Another consequence was that the person could not stand the smell of people, since we stank very badly to animals. People who returned from the animal world

could not even stand the smell of human's clothing! Either the shaman could fix this situation or the person had to live apart from the group until she slowly got used to the smell of people again.

There was also another world under the water and that is where Crow went to steal the sun and the moon. The world was always dark and Crow heard that a 'High' man owned the sun and moon and he lived under the water. If you could lift up the edge of the water you could walk under it and it was just like our world. This is what Crow did. See Figure # 7 of my sketch of the scene after Crow transforms himself into a spruce needle or piece of dirt and the 'High' man's virgin daughter went down to the stream to get a drink of water. Remember that when a person is in another world, it looks and feels just like our Human World. Therefore, there are streams that people can drink from and even paddle canoes on the water within the Water World. It was here that she drank Crow in the form of the spruce needle or piece of dirt and how Crow was able to get inside her. The daughter then became pregnant and later gave birth to a baby boy who was in fact Crow. Crow knew that grandparents spoil their grandchildren and exploiting this behavior he was able to get the grandfather to let him play with first the moon and later the sun. In this the boy seemingly 'lost' both the sun and moon, but in fact stole them from the 'High' man. Once in his possession Crow took the sun and moon back to the Human World. Crow attached the two to the bottom of the Sky World and the Human World was now able to experience day and night.

The sun and moon did not move in the sky but instead the earth was rotating on a shaft that was held by a female Elder, a view held long before Copernicus! Sometimes demons came and tried to take the staff away and that is when the world shakes, causing our earthquakes.

Figure # 7. The 'High' man's daughter in the underwater world. UvK drawing.

Above was the Sky World. When you looked up at night you could see the light shining through the holes in the ground of the Sky World. The Sky World looked just like our world and that is where the Sky or Star people came from. It is in the Sky World that the two

sisters ended up being married to Star men. There was another world beyond the horizon that we could see and this was generally thought of as the White Winter World. That is where people thought the first white men came from. There was a barrier between the worlds and at one time the animals broke through that barrier which helped to get a balanced climate. Now there was not only winter, but the world had summer also. See figure # 8 for my illustration of the various worlds and their relation to the Human World and figure # 9 for my painting of a scene from "The Girl Who Lived with the Salmon". This painting depicts the moment she has just been returned to human form by a shaman after being in the Salmon World for at least a year.

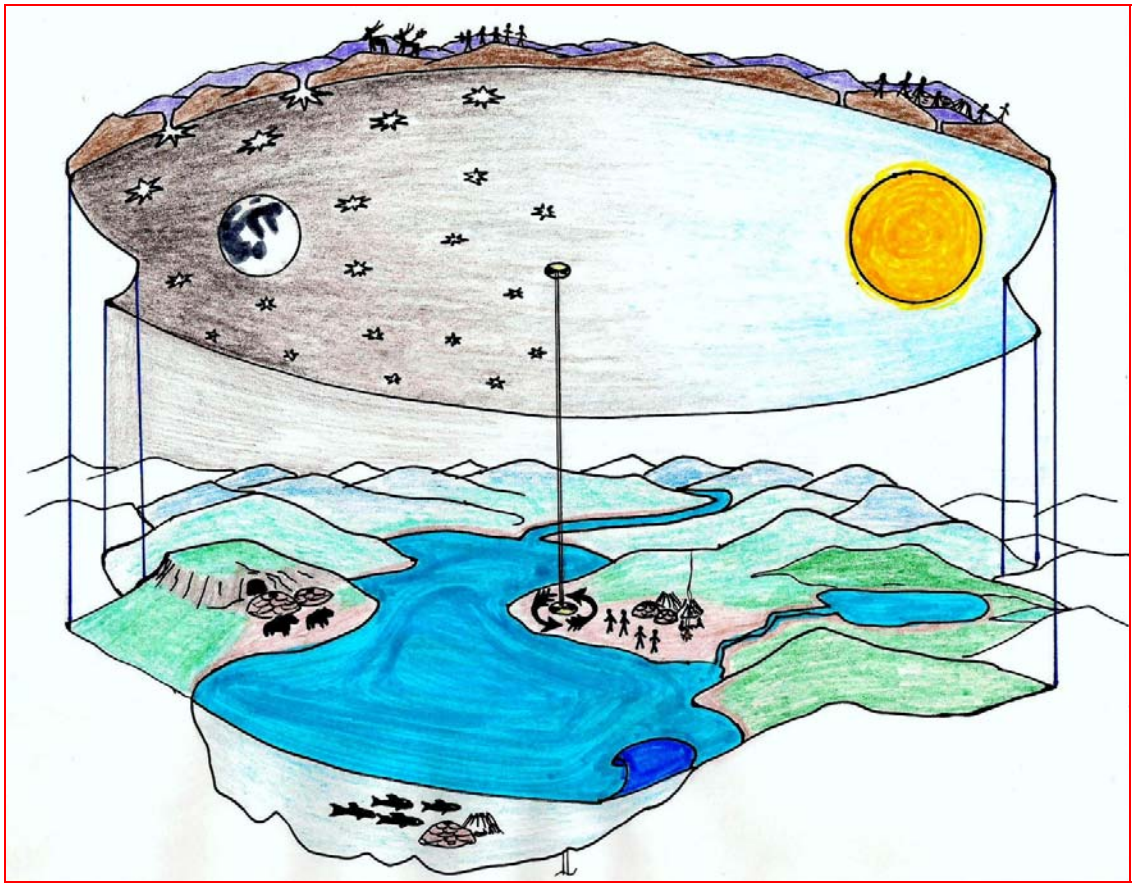


Figure # 8. Various First Nations Worlds. UvK. Drawing.

The above illustration gives you a basic view of our world in relationship to the other worlds that occupy this planet. In the center of the land is the human camp by the lake, in the world we occupy. It is beside the pivot point where the earth rotates. Beyond the horizon is the White Winter World and above is the Sky World. You can see people living there, as well as the holes in the ground of the Sky World. One part of the sky is becoming night and this is the beginning of day for the Spirit World. The Water World also has a camp since when a human is in that world, the fish look, act, and speak just like humans. Across the lake from the Human World is a camp from the Animal World. Note that the sun and moon are attached to the bottom of the sky world. The sun and moon were sometimes thought of as being alive, just like people, but with god- like powers.

Figure # 9. The Girl Who Lived with the Salmon has returned to Human Form. UvK. Painting.

In the above painting you can see the girl who has just been returned to human form. The girl was playing along the water with four (the number four is the most common number used in Yukon First Nations stories) other children the previous summer and suddenly vanished. The other kids, and later the parents, went looking for her in vain. They thought maybe a bear got her. They went to a shaman to find out if that is what happened. The shaman consulted his spirit guides and found out that the Salmon people took their daughter. The shaman said that they had to watch for her in the next year when they were netting salmon. That next year, when the mother was about to cut the head off of a salmon, her knife scraped along a copper necklace. The daughter had been wearing a copper necklace when she vanished and the mother now knew that this fish was her daughter. The parents took the fish to the shaman so he could return her to human form. The shaman put the fish in a pit covered with swan down and started his ritual. After a period of time he saw breathing from the pit and was able to pull the naked child from the swan's down. After she was given some clothes, the shaman cured her of the disgust she had for the smell of humans. The girl was later able to teach the people how the salmon wanted to be treated. This is the basic story, but there are various versions from different areas around the Yukon. Note in the painting the coming of night and thus the Spirit World. The stars are the light shining through the bottom of the Sky World. The sun and moon are attached to the bottom of the Sky World and the water represents the Water World. The two people sitting behind the fire are in fact wolves who have taken human form and represent the Animal World. When animals take human form they always sit on the opposite side of the fire from people.

The world was always here but there was a time when it flooded, and was remade by, for south-central Yukon First Nations people, Crow. Crow was a very powerful deity but with human characteristics. Once Crow remade the world he created men and later created women. Next, Crow (along with Beaverman) had to make the world a safe place for human beings since there were many dangers in the early world. Once done he left and has not been back since. Interestingly enough, historically there have been a series of floods in the southern Yukon, the largest flood ending 9,000 years ago when the present day Whitehorse would have been under at least 70 meters of water! Once the flood happened Crow was trapped over the water with no place to land and was getting concerned until he saw Sea

Woman or Seal Women (depending on the version), sunning herself on a mound of dirt. See figure # 10 of my painting of Crow flying over the flood and figure # 11 of Crow stealing Sea Woman's baby. Crow flew behind Sea Woman and stole her baby. Crow told Sea Woman he would not return her baby until she brought up more earth from the bottom of the water. He had to ask four times. Again, four is an important number and often things have to be tried four times in stories before they will succeed. The fourth he asked Sea Woman did bring up earth and Crow then spread that earth around with his beak to remake the world.

Figure # 10. Crow flying over the flooded World. UvK. Painting.

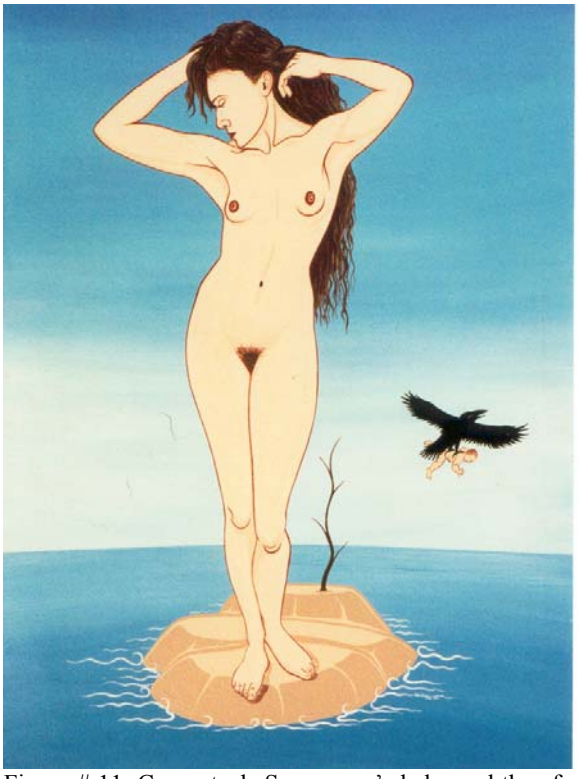


Figure # 11. Crow steals Seawoman's baby and thus forces her to bring up earth so he can remake the World. UvK. Painting.

For other Athapaskan groups other animals dove down to bring up earth. For example, it was Beaver for the Gwich'in people. The 'earth-diver' story is common throughout northwestern North America. Once the world was remade Game Mother made many of the animals but most of the animals were large and often ate people. There were also cannibals that preyed on people. It was looking as though human beings would become extinct! To prevent this, Game Mother called all the animals to pull out their sharp teeth so they could not eat people anymore. Only some came, the moose, sheep, caribou and so forth. Other animals hid and did not respond to Games Mother's calls. These were the bear, wolf and those animals that still today have sharp teeth. See figure # 12 of my sketch of Game Mother removing the sharp teeth from the animals.

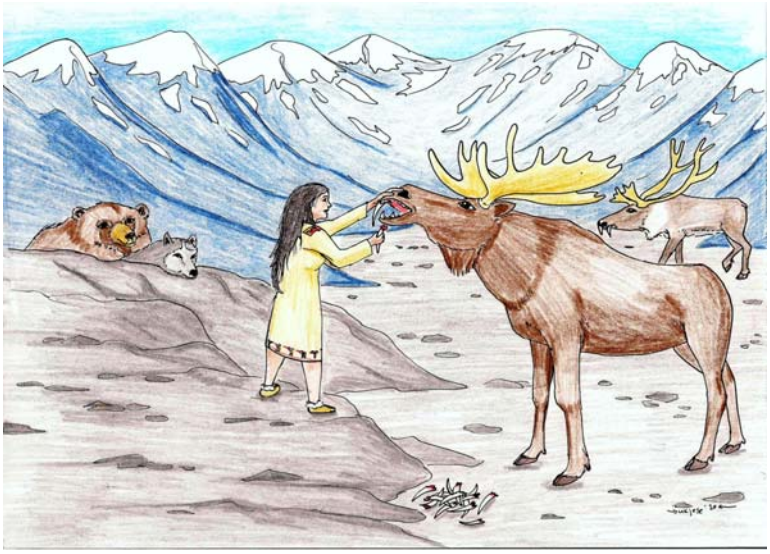


Figure # 12. Game Mother removing the animals' sharp teeth. UvK. Painting.

Once the obeying groups of animals had their teeth removed, the world was a bit safer for humans but there were still many dangers. Because of this, Crow and Beaverman teamed up and travelled around the world, making the giant animals smaller and killing all the cannibals. Crow and Beaverman kept the animals small by killing the parent animals and telling the baby animals not to grow any bigger. See figure # 13 for my painting of Crow and Beaverman killing one of the cannibals.

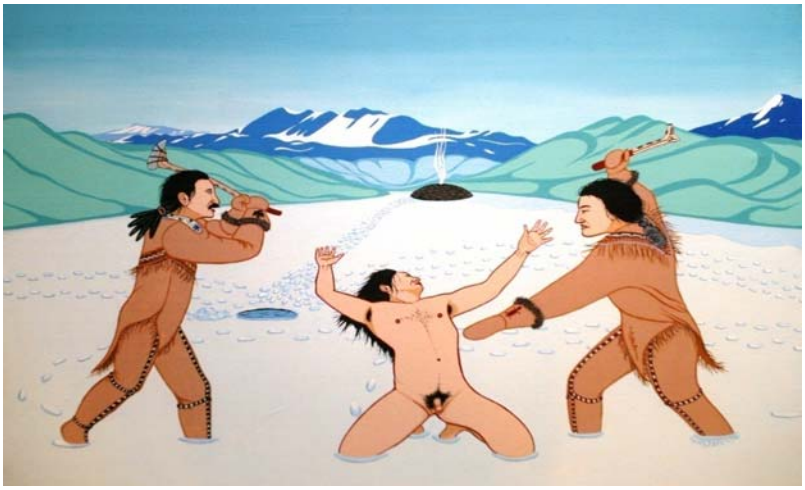


Figure # 13. Crow and Beaverman killing the Cannibal. UvK. Painting.

In the above story Crow and Beaverman trick the cannibal into taking his clothes off so that the cold would weaken him. Once weakened by the cold Crow and Beaverman could easily kill the cannibal and his wife, who was in the skin house in the background.

The story of two brothers or partners travelling around the world fixing things is also common throughout northwestern North America. The stories of Crow and his travels and adventures on earth are commonly referred to as the Crow cycle. Sometime after the world was safe for humans Crow went away and has not come back. These stories are basically how our world was formed and changed into our present world.

Relationships with Animals

Because Athapaskans lived so close to nature it only stands to reason that animals played a large role in the lives of Yukon First Nations people. The relationship was so close that sometimes the differences between animals and humans became blurred, as becomes clear in the stories where people entered the Animal World or animals entered the Human World. People often had animal spirit guides that helped them in many things, especially in hunting. Shamans would have up to eight spiritual guides and while they did not all have to be animal spirits, most were.

I will start off by listing the birds in their order of importance for early Yukon First Nations. Most readers will find that this list is not what they were expecting. I am sure most of you had thought that the eagle is the most important bird for Yukon Athapaskans. This idea has been spread by pan-Indianism and the importance the eagle has for the Plains Indians. While the eagle is significant and even sacred for many First Nations groups in other parts of North America, it simply was not for the Athapaskans in north-western North America. The most important and therefore the most depicted bird is the Raven who is called Crow, although the images of Crow have been at times misidentified as an eagle. The name Crow has caused a bit of confusion for outsiders as there are no crows in the Yukon and yet one of the two moieties is Crow. There is no real explanation to how this came about but I suspect that the first white men in the Yukon called the Ravens crows and the name stuck. Furthermore, the powerful deity who helped make the world right for humans is called Crow. The coastal Tlingits called the Crow clan Raven clan and the equivalent to our Wolf clan is the coastal Tlingit's Eagle Clan. The next important bird is the owl, often the bringer of bad news. When an owl visits you or is around your camp and hoots he is bringing you bad news. In this case, there will be a coming of bad luck, often in the form of a person getting injured, becoming sick or dying. The owl was still a concern for my people at wilderness camps when I was a teenager. I have never seen the owl depicted in any form. The next bird is the most spiritual and its feathers, down, bones, feet and other parts are used by my people in rituals. The down was especially used by shamans and you have read an example of this in the story above. The graceful animal I am referring to is the swan and could be considered as one of the birds most called upon during spiritual practices. Interestingly, I have not come across a single image that has been positively identified as a swan but swan feather fans are used in potlatches. Next is the seagull, a bird symbolizing trade. Seagull feathers are periodically used and I think this bird is sometimes depicted in art. I will discuss the seagull in more detail in the next chapter on Geometric Art images. The next birds also have some importance for Yukon First Nations people for various reasons. Woodpecker feathers were used for dance wanes and grave markers and Canada Jays (Camp Robbers) are considered good luck as they always visit especially when an animal is killed. There are some other birds that are mentioned in stories such as chickadees, eagles, hawks and snipes. Interestingly, one of the most important, traditional uses of the eagle was the fabrication of gopher snares from their feather spines. For the Inland Tlingit the eagle does have a greater importance, since the eagle

(Dakhlawedi) is one of the clans under the Wolf (Yanyedi) moiety. For the Coastal Tlingits, Raven is Eagle's wife, which then means the Coastal Raven is a female. In the Yukon, Raven would be Crow clan and Eagle would be Wolf clan. In the past a few Inland Tlingit groups located closest to the coast sometimes used the terms Eagle and Raven clan instead of Wolf and Crow. For Southern Yukon First Nations the Wolf-Eagle identification issue is not a problem. The Elders simply say: "Wolf claims Eagle" and everything is fine.

One bird I did not mention but also ranks quite high is the thunderbird. The bird is from the ancient times, but since we still have thunder in the Yukon, some Elders may believe that the thunderbird is still around. In McClellan's *My Old People Say* some of her informants report of people they knew that have seen thunderbirds. I have not seen any depictions of thunderbirds, but there is a Yakutat Tlingit Thunderbird crest. The Yakutat are said to be Athapaskans who moved to the coast a long time ago and adopted the Tlingit culture and language but retained Athapaskan stories and other Athapaskan traits. The thunderbird is described in *My Old People Say* on page 175 by various southern Yukon people as: "eyes just flashed and flashed and there was a thunder sound..."This informant described the thunderbird as being about the size of a camp robber (Canada jay)."He had a bill like an eagle. Both the bill and the ends of his wings were golden,...looking like a blue grouse, but having a red chest." Although small the thunderbird is very dangerous. A Tahltan story about the dangers of thunderbird points this out. A Tahltan clan had left their village after a dispute and was travelling down the Teslin River to start a new life. The leader saw a shiny feather on the ground and kicked it. It turned out to be a thunderbird feather and when he kicked it there was an explosion or flash of lightning. The result was that most people in the clan were killed and the few survivors were absorbed into the other local First Nations groups in the area.

Figure # 14. The Tahltan leader kicks the thunderbird feather. UvK painting.

There was a song about this event that used to be sung by the Tagish people at Carcross.

Besides birds there are other animals such as wolves, bears, otters, and even mice that hold various levels of respect or spiritual values. A good example is the wolf. The wolf is an often shown image because it is one of the two Yukon moieties. Images of wolves have been painted, engraved, carved and beaded. They are still placed on headstones when a person of the Wolf clan passes away. There are stories about wolves taking human form and helping people.

The other important animal is the bear. They are often thought of as relatives and there are many stories of people going with bears and living with them. To repeat, when people enter the Animal World they see everything as if it was the Human World and the animals look and act human. So when the people went with a bear and they were married, and they went to what appeared to the fish camps, they would have gone to what was in fact the bear's own fishing areas along the creeks and rivers where the salmon spawned. Many groups do not eat bear meat since they are thought of as relatives, but men do go out to kill bears as a sign of bravery and population control. Later I will be discussing carvings of bears.

A powerful animal is the wolverine. Wolverines are always breaking into food caches, stealing all the food and peeing on whatever is left over, so that others can not use it. They are furious and cunning. Once, in ancient times, when a hunter had killed a wolverine, he wondered what kind of brain this animal had that made him so mean. So the hunter split open the wolverine's skull and thus released all the mosquitoes into the world! I have seen no depictions of wolverines.

Besides the predators, there are all the other animals that are needed for survival such as the caribou, moose and sheep. There are a number of these animals shown in hunting scenes, often on arrow quivers. The arrow quivers will be examined closer in chapter seven-Art of the Hunt & War. There are stories of people being taken by caribou and living with them. Many of these stories start off with the human being somehow offending the animal and then the animal takes that person. Once the human being has lived with the animals it allows her to better understand them. She is shown how to respect and treat them, even after her human relatives have killed the animal for food. The Girl (or Boy, depending on the version) who lived with the Salmon story (see above) is a good example of a person learning the salmon's ways. Note that when people are taken by animals to their world, time and space are different. Days in the Animal World may in reality be weeks in the Human World. Also, animals seem to easily travel back and forth between the worlds and adopt human form, but people cannot do the same. And to repeat, when an animal takes a person, only the animals or a human shaman can return the person to human form. Beavers and the double-limbed beavers (also from the ancient times) were important animals and were one of the clans of the Tagish and Inland Tlingit. I will discuss them in more detail in chapter eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death. Frogs were also a crest and there are many stories and images of them. I will discuss frogs in more detail in the Art of the Potlatch chapter. Beavers and frogs were impressive to Yukon First Nations people because they could live in two worlds (water and land). There were other animals with a very dark side besides the wolverines. They were otters and martens. People did not talk about these animals, as they had strong powers and just talking about them could cause problems. Remember that animals can hear and understand what people are talking about. Yet over the years the value of otter furs seems to have reduced the strong fear that existed in the past.

While I have mentioned animals of which there are no images, in the coming chapters I will be focusing only on those animals that are depicted in some way.

Languages, Environment & Inland Tlingits

Yukon First Nations people are made up of two language groups, the Athapaskan and the Inland Tlingit. The Athapaskan people span from the western part of Alaska to Hudson's Bay in the east. The northern limit is the tree line; from there the Inuit occupy the land. In Canada the southern limit is roughly from central British Columbia and the northern part of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The coastal mountains generally mark the western limit from the Pacific Ocean. In the south there are small Athapaskan pockets down the southwestern coast of the United States. These are the Pacific Athapaskans. In the southwestern interior of the United States are the Navahos and the Apaches, the southern Athapaskans. Athapaskans are one of the most widely distributed of all the Indian linguistic families of North America and in terms of territory; you could easily put all of Europe inside the Athapaskan areas! The Inland Tlingit speak the same language as the Tlingits along the Alaskan coast and live in a small area of the southern Yukon and Northern British Columbia.

The northern Athapaskans share a language and an environment which is part of the sub-arctic of North America. Besides the land they also shared a similar lifestyle, spiritual beliefs and art. Because of the shared art styles, and because of the limited inventory of early Yukon First Nations artifacts, I will also refer to Athapaskan groups outside the Yukon to reinforce my ideas. As you can see on the map in figure # 4 in the introduction, the Yukon First Nations people are made up of the Northern and Southern Tutchone, Tagish, Kaska, Han, Gwich'in and some Upper Tanana in the western part of the Yukon. You will also notice that the Tahltan are just south of the Yukon border. I have included Tahltan art as it relates to the early Yukon art; less than 200 years ago they were settled in the southern Yukon until they were displaced by the Inland Tlingit. While not on the map, there is also Mountain Dene in Ross River who originally came from just the other side of the Yukon-Northwest Territory border. Before the Yukon borders were established there was a lot of movement across these present day national and territorial boundaries.

The Inland Tlingits are relatively-speaking newcomers to the Yukon. They moved inland from the Juneau area in coastal Alaska about 200 years ago. Trade is cited as the most likely reason, since the coastal Tlingits traded with the Russian American Company and later with the Hudson's Bay Company and American trading companies. The coastal Tlingits, in turn, traded with the interior Athapaskans. The trade with the interior had been well established by the time the first white people arrived in the area. By moving inland it is assumed that trade was made easier, but at the same time it set off a series of 'raids' back and forth with the Tahltan people. Over a period of time the Tahltan were displaced and those areas are now settled by the Tlingit. In order to survive in the harsher interior environment the Tlingits had to adapt to the interior lifestyle and thus had to take on many aspects of interior culture. This was also facilitated by intermarrying with interior peoples.

There was already a lot of intermarrying between the Tlingits and the Athapaskan people and this simply carried on when the Tlingit moved inland. After the move inland it was not possible for the now Inland Tlingit to work in the coastal style art. It became lost along with the coastal lifestyle because of the different environment they came from. But the Inland Tlingit did retain their language, clan structures and spiritual beliefs. As Julie Cruikshank says in *Through the Eyes of Strangers: A Preliminary Survey of Land Use History in the Yukon During the late Nineteenth Century*:

> In order to adapt to their new environment-freshwater fishing, hunting of caribou, moose, small game animals, birds-they had to radically alter their material culture. At the same time they retained their coastal Tlingit language, their social culture and their economic ties with the coast. (Cruikshank 1974: V 32)

The radical change included their art which became less recognizable as coastal Tlingit and more like Athapaskan art. The Inland Tlingits did not exactly copy the Athapaskan art, but developed their own unique art 'style' that had Athapaskan characteristics. I will be discussing this later in the chapter.

Art Periods

I have divided the art from the Yukon into three periods. These periods could also be applied to other First Nations groups neighboring the Yukon, since their experiences are very similar to what happened in the Yukon Territory. They are the Geometric Period, the Beaded Period (which can be also thought of as the Floral Period because of the near exclusive use of floral designs) and the Current Period. There is a certain amount of overlap in styles and therefore I would like you to realize that these periods do not have set start and end dates. Some parts of an art practice may have continued into the next art period.

Geometric Period

The Geometric Period holds the earliest art style. I indentify this period as the Geometric Period because the art was quite geometric in nature. The earliest example I have seen is from about 7300 years before the present. So, as you can see, this is an old art style. The art is generally much like the early European Paleolithic Art that was done in Europe 10,000 years ago by hunter-gathers. Once the Europeans switched to farming their art changed. Since Yukon First Nations stayed hunter gatherers, farming not being an option here, the hunter-gatherer art style stayed the same until very recently. The art was painted, engraved, embroidered and carved on those items that members of the band possessed such as tools, drums, spoons, quivers, clothing, amulets, etc. While figurative images were created, there were also a lot of non-figurative images/motifs. This art period started its decline with the introduction of beads and other trade items. At first, the beads simply replaced the porcupine embroidery imagery. Starting sometime after the late 1800s, floral bead designs were adopted and there was a rapid decline of creating embroidered art. In addition traded tools replaced hand made tools and designs were not added to these new tools. The Geometric art style was pretty much replaced with the influx of trade items in the late 1800s and early 1900s although a few rare elements of this art style were still made until World War Two, after which point the geometric imagery vanished. In the coming chapters I will be examining various art forms from the Geometric Period in detail. See my illustration of a typical Geometric Period Art man in figure # 15 below.

Figure # 15. Art from the Geometric Period. UvK drawing.

Beaded Period

Beads started making their way into the interior in the early to mid 1800s. As I mentioned earlier the beads simply replaced the embroidery and the art style was still geometric. Once bead use was well established floral designs began to appear. The beadwork was limited to clothing, bags and those hide and cloth articles that beadwork could be done on. I suspect that the floral designs generally arrived from the north via the Hudson Bay Company's trade routes. That route would start from the supply depots in the south of Canada and the trade items, including beads, would be moved north, down the Mackenzie River. Once at the northern end of the Mackenzie River the trade items went overland to the Porcupine River and followed down river towards the west to the junction of the Yukon River and the Hudson Bay trading post of Fort Yukon. When First Nations women saw the beaded floral patterns owned by the Métis helpers and the beaded creations by the wives of Hudson Bay staff, the woman also started to create floral designs.

The more complex Mackenzie style floral designs that reached Fort Yukon in the late 1840s, early 1850s became simpler floral designs that worked their way up the Yukon River toward to south and into the upper Yukon River area. There were also unique Tahltan and Inland Tlingit floral designs, but those came from other sources. The Inland Tlingit adopted the coastal Tlingit floral style and the Tahltan never really left the geometric designs. As you will see in the coming chapter on bead designs, there were regional styles. I discuss the four Yukon regional styles: the Gwich'in, the Upper Yukon River, the Inland Tlingit and the Tahltan. I will describe the beaded animal designs in the chapter on figurative art. The Beaded Period started around the mid-1800s and lasted until World War Two, so a span of almost a 100 years. The tourist trade that came with the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898 started the decline of the Beaded Period. The Beaded Period was pretty well over with the completion of the Alaska Highway in World War Two. After World War Two the regional

styles and fancy beaded designs faded away. This leads us to the next period, the Current Period. See figure # 16 of my illustration of a man from the Beaded Period.

Figure # 16. Art from the Beaded Period. UvK drawing.

The Current Period

The forces that result in the loss of the Yukon First Nations visual culture to the point that we are now creating an art form that was never done in the Yukon, the Northwest coast Indian art style along with some Pan-Indianism styles, starts with the introduction of the white man's trade items. The current Period's art is most often carving in wood, painting in acrylics and prints. The original geometric style production is reduced with trade until it ceases to exist after World War Two. Even the regional beaded styles are gone after World War Two. The building of the Alaskan Highway in World War Two is a major turning point for Yukon First Nations visual culture because it signifies a major chance for Yukon First Nations culture overall. The Alaska Highway opened up the Yukon, to the point where almost all Yukon First Nations children could be taken to the Christian mission schools. The Canadian government's policy of what is commonly known as "Killing the Indian in the child" could therefore be used to a greater extent. The policy was devastatingly successful in the killing of Yukon First Nations culture. A cultural void was created after World War Two. Almost all First Nations children born after 1945 grew up only speaking English. The Yukon First Nations spiritual beliefs were in decline before World War Two and the last shamans passed away in the 1970s. Our spirituality was replaced, or at least heavily absorbed, by Christianity. People furthermore lost their ability to live off the land. While presently some First Nations people hunt and spend time in the bush, very few spend *most* of their time in the wilderness anymore. People are still creating bead designs, but the styles have blended and become simpler. The older fancier regional styles are almost gone. Other than the beadwork there was little else done and the visual culture, the art, was nowhere to be seen. It was as if

Yukon First Nations had no art. This void was to be filled, starting in the mid-1980s, with the Northwest Coast Indian art style. It reached a point where in present day Yukon the northwest Coast Indian art style is generally thought of as being the traditional art style of the Yukon First Nations people!

One of the reasons that Yukon First Nations culture was quite effectively destroyed was a combination of a determined oppressive government (First Nations were not made citizens of Canada until 1956, could not attend public school until 1959 and could not vote in a federal election until 1960!) that totally controlled a group of people that had a small population and was generally non-confrontational. The defensive isolation that protected the original Yukon First Nation culture was largely removed with the Alaska Highway and other roads built in World War Two. When you compare the Yukon First Nations situation to other groups that were taken over, you will see the larger and more aggressive populations are given more respect and power from the dominant culture after the take-over. For instance, the warlike Maoris from New Zealand could not be effectively conquered by the British. Closer to the Yukon was the relationship between the Tlingits and Russians. The Russian America Company established New Archangel (now Sitka) in 1799 but it was wiped out by the Tlingits in 1802 and about 150 Russians and Aleut workers were killed and the remainder enslaved. The Russians returned in 1804 and defeated the Tlingits and restored New Archangel. But from this point on the Russians never dominated the Tlingits and always had to be on guard against attack. The larger population and aggressiveness of the Tlingits limited the power of the Russians during the whole time they occupied Alaska.

As I mentioned before the defensive isolation protected Yukon First Nations culture but only until the Yukon was 'opened up' to the outside world in World War Two. Examples of other groups where their culture was protected by isolation are the Athapaskan Apaches in the southwestern United States. The United States policy towards Native Americans was one of annihilation and if that was not possible the tribe was to be isolated. As a result of this the Apache culture stayed intact and was still strong. For example they were still wearing traditional hide clothing in the early twentieth century, well after Yukon First Nations had stopped making the traditional hide clothing. In the Yukon the most isolated community is Old Crow; the only way to get there is to fly in. As a result of the isolation the Gwich'in people have retained overall slightly more of their culture (including their language) than the other Yukon First Nations.

Brief Explanation of Yukon First Nations Images

One common aspect of Yukon First Nations art is the artist's desire for individuality. Everybody made their own images for their own reasons. This could be to make something fancy, or to represent their clan, a story, or a historical event or maybe for the purposes of a talisman for successful hunts. There was also art that was created with spiritual intent, such as shaman's art. The art provided a link to other dimension, such as the Spiritual World or Animal World. Lastly, there would have been instances that art was made for art sake, or to make an item fancy. When I looked at early artifacts I did not come across any images or items that were the exact copy of another. If the images were very close in style I believed they were made by the same artist, since that art was often collected from the same area during the same period. However, there are still similarities to be found in the works created within groups. An example is the rendering of painted or beaded bird styles by the Inland Tlingit. These images, while each being unique, still had the same feel collectively, and differed from the bead bird styles from the Tutchone people, even though they are neighbors. I will be showing examples of such art in Chapter Five-Figurative Art. Overall the Inland Tlingit had a larger image vocabulary, including the clan imagery, than Yukon Athapaskans.

The common medium that was used for making art in the Yukon was quill or bead work on hides and incising and/or painting on tools, drums and other items. The art was added to the things people used. Art was not created to be hung on the skin house's walls for the sole aim of enjoyment or esthetics. Instead, a wall pocket that had a purpose would be beautifully beaded and hung on a tent or cabin wall, which could be enjoyed by all.

A Comparison between Coastal Tlingit Art and Yukon First Nations Art

The following are my observations about the early art styles in the Yukon. The first obvious difference with the Coastal Tlingit, as well as most of the Northwest Coast Indian Art tradition, is that the coastal peoples followed a very strict set of rules on the creation and presentation of their art. When an image was 'constructed' it was done with present patterns. Basically, these patterns or shapes are the ovoid, circle, "U" (an ovoid split in half), "L" and "S" shapes that are basically the "U" shape split in half. There are primary shapes or form lines and they are often done in black. They provide the main structure of the image. Secondary shapes are often done in red oxide and fill in the spaces of the main structure. Finally, tertiary shapes fill any remaining smaller spaces. These tertiary shapes are often in blue, green or blue-green colours. See figure # 17 below for a basic breakdown of Northwest Coast Indian art motifs. Once the artist understands the function of the shapes he can follow the rules in the creation of an image. A raven would have a straight beak, an eagle a curved beak so the tip pointed down, a hawk's beak would curve fully back, and so forth. So a raven created by one Tlingit artist would not be too different, if at all, from another Tlingit artist's raven. Only an expert may be able to identify the creator based on maybe the thickness of the ovoid form lines or in other aspects where personal variation can be added without breaking the rules. This approach to the creation of art was in some ways the opposite for early Yukon First Nations artists, in which case every artist's work was unique.

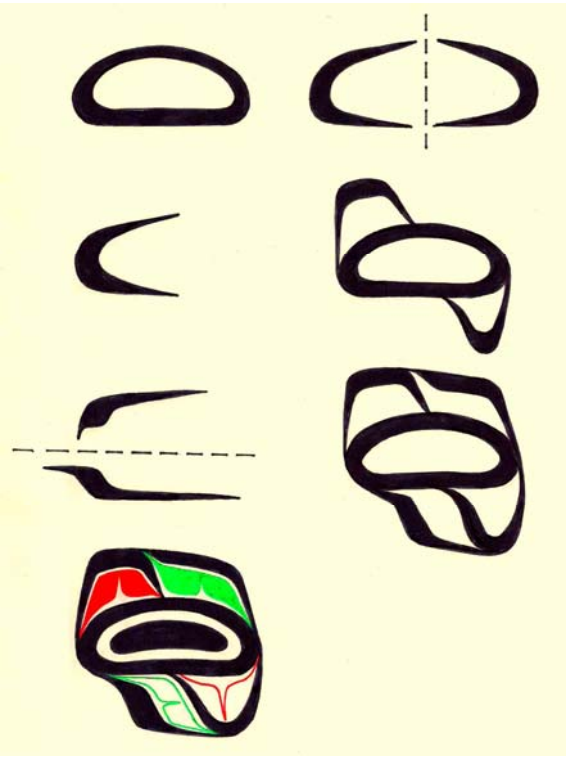


Figure # 17. Basic Northwest Coast Indians art forms. UvK drawing.

Yukon Athapaskans admire individuality and it shows in the art. They were however restricted by the available material and by the fact that they had to be on the move seasonally, something the Tlingits did not have to do. Yukon art was placed on tools, clothing and other items that could be easily transported. The Coastal Tlingit, with the wealth of the ocean on their doorstep, did not have to lead a semi-nomadic lifestyle and therefore had permanent villages. They also had the large cedar wood to work with to create large works of art. They made poles and long houses that were permanent structures and created bentwood boxes that were too heavy to easily carry. Those bentwood boxes were intended to stay in the long houses. The Tlingits also added their art on spoons, canoes, paddles, drums, clothing etc. like the Yukon artists did. Material and environmental limitations resulted in the interior 'style' that once was common throughout the Yukon and neighboring Alaska, Northwest Territories and northern British Columbia. The material and environmental richness along the Pacific coast resulted in the Northwest Coast Indian art style that was common along the whole Northwest coast.

Another difference was the purpose of the art. Along the Northwest Coast the images presented clans, families, people, stories and history. There was of course decorative art done in the Northwest Coast but that seemed to be of a secondary nature. The Athapaskan art, on the other hand, was quite decorative and there were few images when compared to the Tlingits. Athapaskan art was largely to make things 'fancy' as opposed to narrative. Narrative art was made but in limited quantity. Another difference between the interior and the coast was the use of black and red paints. Black paint was made form charcoal and red paint made from red ochre. The coastal artists mainly used black and as a secondary color red. In the interior, red was the most commonly used color and black was only used once in a while, even though obtaining black paint was much easier. Maybe red was more valued because of its restricted availability.

Comparison between Inland Tlingit and Coastal Tlingit Art

When the Coastal Tlingit moved to the interior and became the Inland Tlingit, their art changed. Environment affects the creation of art. Like the art of all Yukon First Nations, Inland Tlingit art was greatly different from the art of the coastal peoples just on the other side of the coastal mountains. The rich resources and lush climate of the coast allowed for the establishment of dedicated artists. That is, these people were able to become specialized in the field. They did not have to spend a great deal of their time seeking food or preparing for winter. This all changed when the first Coastal Tlingits moved inland to become the Inland Tlingit people. They made this change of location in order to trade. When they arrived there may have been a lot of intermarrying with the Athapaskans in order to ease the adjustment to the new environment. Even though they came from the coast originally, the Inland Tlingit did not use the ovoid and "U", "S" and "L" shapes. It is likely that the artists of the Coastal Tlingit did not accompany the Tlingit traders, for obvious reasons. The environment would have changed the role of the artist into a hunter-gatherer. When the rich resources of the coast were left behind the tribe could no longer support a person who only created art work; they would have had to contribute to the group in a more practical way. If the coastal Tlingit artists did move inland, they would have found there was no cedar to work with and the local wood not as agreeable to carve. Those artists would now have to live a semi-nomadic lifestyle and anything they created would have to be either left at the old camp or carried to the next camp by themselves or the new owners. This would have been a very difficult task. Still, one would think that some of the Inland Tlingit traders who moved inland would have produced art in the coastal style. However, I have never seen any examples of this. Whatever the case, the Inland Tlingit very quickly adopted more individual Athapaskan art style. I have

seen one piece of ovoid use from the 1950s which was made by an Inland Tlingit artist. Before this time I have seen no coastal Tlingit art style examples made by Inland Tlingit artists. Any other northwest coast art I did view was traded into the Yukon.

This drum is the only example of the coastal Tlingit style of art I came across and would be the only example of Northwest Coast art made for at least the next 20 years in the Yukon. This is the drum that Jim Fox donated to the MacBride Museum in the 1970s. On top of this, the drum's image was not the original image created on the drum! The coastal style eye ovoids are painted over top of an earlier design. See figure # 18 for this example. The drum was donated, and may have been created, by Jim Fox. Emma Shorty, an Inland Tlingit from Teslin, identified Jim Fox as her uncle. This would make this drum belong to the Inland Tlingit community of Teslin, Yukon. The seven Northwest Coast Indian art style eyes in the centre are loosely painted in a circle close to the center of the drum. These lines are not as fine as lines on the drums of the coastal Tlingits. The old photographs of Coastal Tlingit drums show very finely finished lines. The change in drum design may indicate an intention to sell it to tourists. It appears that the original design was maybe depicting the Crow and whale/fish story and later the design was changed to a Northwest Coast Indian design with 'Whitehorse Y.T.' painted on it. The addition of 'Yukon, Whitehorse' and other such location identifiers was often a sign that the item was intended for the tourist trade. See figure # 18, right, for my sketch of the first intended motif.

Figure # 18, top; NWC style drum. X72.1.56, MacBride Museum. Bottom; UvK drawing.

While some Northwest Coast Indian art was done in the Yukon in the 1970s the strict coastal art style that is now common in the Yukon has only been created since the mid-1980s. This is when Inland Tlingit artists such as Keith Wolf-Smarch went searching for their culture and found no Yukon examples of Native art. They then looked to the Coastal Tlingit art style for inspiration. After all, the coastal Tlingit long house and totem poles were still standing, as were bent-wood boxes covered in Tlingit art. That art filled the artistic First Nations void in the Yukon, especially for the Inland Tlingit. It was easier for the Inland Tlingit to adopt the coastal style because of their connections with their ancestral relatives and art from the coast. Another possible reason for the absence of coastal style art created by the Inland Tlingit before the 1950s is stated by McClellan in *The Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 6. Subarctic*:

> Although their ancestors formerly lived along the upper Taku River, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries most of the Inland Tlingit moved permanently across the divide to the headwaters of the Yukon River, perhaps splitting the ancestors of the Athapaskan speaking Tagish from the Athapaskan Tahltan. Some or all of the Inland Tlingit may themselves be descended from Athapaskan-speaking Indians that adopted Tlingit as their chief language owing to extensive trade and intermarriage with coastal Tlingits during the nineteenth century. Specifically, they may be the descendants of the Athapaskans that Dawson (1889:193B) and Emmons (1911:5) called Taku and described as speaking Tahltan or a closely related dialect and in fact the Tlingit they speak diverges somewhat from that of the Coastal Tlingit, who class them as *gunana* 'strangers'. (Helm 1981: 469)

Based on the above statement, at least a certain percentage of the present Inland Tlingit are Athapaskans that adopted the Tlingit language. This is plausible, since in the past many First Nations people were multi-lingual and could speak two or three languages. The people in that area were already fluent in the Tlingit language and over time this became their main language. This would have improved trade and pleased their main trading partners, the coastal Tlingit. With the adoption of the language it seems that absorbing other aspects of the culture would only be logical, such as the more complex clan system and house crest system. Examples of this approach can be seen with the Southern Tutchone, who in the past all could speak fluent Tlingit and adopted simpler versions of the coastal Tlingit clans. Unlike the Inland Tlingit, the Southern Tutchone did not have a formal Eagle clan, but recognize the Eagle clan and place it under the Wolf clan. There is also a Frog House of the Crow clan. Further to the north, the Northern Tutchone do not have such variations to the clan, it is simply Wolf and Crow. If many Athapaskan people adopted the Tlingit language this would explain why the early art of the Inland Tlingit was in the Yukon Athapaskan art style, since some of the creators would have been Tlingit speaking Athapaskans. I believe the combination of a) some coastal Tlingits moving inland, intermarrying with the Athapaskans and adjusting to the environment and b) some Athapaskans adopting the Tlingit language, resulted in the Inland Tlingit art style having its own uniqueness: quite different from the coastal Tlingit art and quite similar to the rest of the Yukon First Nations art styles.

Chapter Two-Geometric & Decorative arts

Geometric Period

I have identified the earliest art in the Yukon as the Geometric Period since the examples are geometric in nature. The materials used in the creation of the imagery went a long way in dictating the form the art would take; this resulted in the geometric style. Tools, drums, arrow quivers, etc. were painted with red ochre or charcoal and/or were engraved; clothing was painted with red ochre and decorated with porcupine or bird feather spine quillwork and fur robes were sewn together to form geometric patterns. There were decorative motifs as well as human, animal and other unidentifiable figures. The later chapters of this paper focus on human and animal images but in this chapter I focus more on the motifs and non-figurative art as a foundation of early Yukon First Nations art. The majority of imagery for the early Yukon falls into this category. I start off with some of the geometric patterns used and later show on what artifacts these designs were placed. Those common tools and items that often have the geometric designs engraved on them are items such as bone arm bands, bone skinning knives including metal knives and dentalia shells.
There were certain motifs commonly used. Below in figure # 19 is a brief visual list of common motifs from the Geometric Period. These are the repeating cone, dot and chevrons; zigzags; crosshatching & complex patterns; crosses (or 4 directions symbols) and variations of these motifs. I will also examine the dot within a circle (Also called the Big Headed Starman motif by McClellan) design in detail.

There are no clear explanations about the early Yukon First Nations use of these motifs. Many of the Elders I spoke to about these motifs stated that they were put on the items "to make them fancy." I have looked beyond the Yukon for explanations and have found examples of these motifs in other cultures, like from old Europe and indigenous peoples throughout the world. While there are sometimes common explanations for some motifs, many times there are different thoughts about them. My objective here is simply to make you more familiar with the commonly used early Yukon First Nations motifs. I would also ask you to be aware of these motifs on the artifacts that I show in the later chapters.

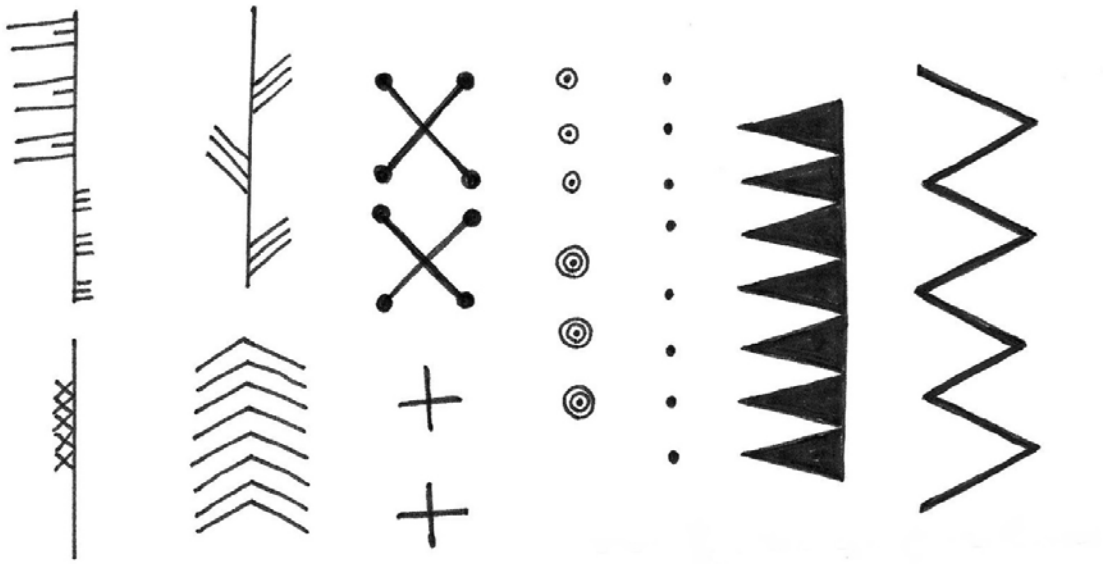


Figure # 19. Zigzag, repeating cone, repeating dot, dot within a circle, crosses, chevrons and various line motifs. UvK drawing.

Repeating cone, dot & chevron motifs

The repeating dot, repeating cone and chevron motifs were often painted on spoons, arrow points, clothing, drums and tools. A variation of the chevron motif was also used by the Inland Tlingit on the chests of human images. To see examples of these go to Chapter Five-Figurative Art. See figure # 20 for an example of a repeating dot motif on a spoon.

Figure # 20, example of the repeating dot motif: Inland Tlingit Spoon; CMC VI-J-56.

I could not find any information about these repeating dot motifs. Nor could I find any information from outside the Yukon that would have added any meaningful insights for Yukon First Nations art. While I could not find any references to the repeating dot motif, I did find some information about the rhythm in art, like the throb of resonance as in the notes of music. In *The Nature of Paleolithic Art* R. Dale Guthrie explains how Paleolithic peoples dealt with patterns:

> Necklaces, bracelets, and amulets from the late Paleolithic are virtually all decorated with repeated abstract patterns. (...) For example, we see comparable abstract or geometric patterns among the traditional artwork of Plains Indian and Eskimo women. (...)
> A number of Paleolithic pendants, buttons, and other accessories have deliberately notched edges or engraved zigzag patterns. We enjoy such patterns today and can see that the Paleolithic eye was likewise engaged. Increased numbers of edges of lines, such as toothed edges, toggles, parallel grooves, crosshatching, or beads on a string, catch and hold the eye longer, as part of their physiological affect on the brain. (Guthrie 2005: 202-203)

According to this, the rhythms caused by the patterns are pleasing, and therefore these may be the visual indicators or references to patterns we experience in life. Such patterns would be the seasons, waves in the water, clouds, our heartbeats and so forth. I find it interesting that the early Yukon First Nations visual patterns can be quite simple, like the repeating dot motif, but also more complex such as the quill work on the breastbands of clothing. This resonates with the early music patterns, which also have aspects of higher complexity. The early Yukon musical instruments were limited to the drum and some rattles, the former being rarer. The patterns created by the drum can be simple, like the repeating dot motif: bang...bang...bang. They can also be slightly more complex, such as the pattern, or rhythm, used for stick gambling: bang-bang...bang-bang...bang-bang.

Repeating dots were not only engraved or painted but later they were added in the form of buttons to provide the border on all button blankets. These button blankets were used while dancing to the repeating drum beat sound pattern. Maybe the repeating dots, or in this case buttons, were the visual link to the physical action of drumming and dancing. Below in figure # 21 is a button blanket from the Kluane Museum of Natural History in Burwash Landing. The blanket was made by Ms. Marge Jackson, a Southern Tutchone Elder. The square on the back may have been a common design made by people of her generation for at least the Southern Tutchone people. Ms. Annie Ned has been reported to also have made these style button blankets. Ms. Marge Jackson explained the square pattern on the back to represent a backpack. A backpack is of course essential for the people that live a semi-nomadic lifestyle. Note that the Inland Tlingit often place clan animals on the back but still use the same colored cloth and place the buttons around the edge of the button blanket. I will be examining button blankets in great detail in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death.

Figure # 21. Button blanket with repeating dots (buttons). Made by Ms. Marge Jackson. 1975.6, KMNH

Zigzag motifs

The zigzag motif and its variations can be found on many Yukon First Nations objects such as hats, bags, drums, tools, scratchers and clothing. See figure # 22 for two examples of the zigzag motif. The knife sheath was collected by Rev. V.C. Sims from Forty-Mile in the Yukon Territory along the Yukon River which would make the artifact Han. The zigzag pattern is created by the use of porcupine quills. The bone scratcher is from the Burke Museum and was collected by George Emmons from the coastal Tlingit in 1909. The artifact notes state that the scratcher was collected from the Chilkat Tlingit who themselves received it in trade from the Tutchone. Also see figure # 5 on page 30 in the introduction for the Tutchone drum that has a zigzag pattern painted around the edge.

While there is little written about these motifs in the Yukon, these zigzag and other related motifs were used by the coastal Tlingits in their baskets and Raven's Tail weaving from which they made blankets, leggings and dance aprons. It is generally accepted to have been adopted from geometric patterns from the Tlingit basketry, which in turn were adopted from the interior (Yukon) people's porcupine embroidery.

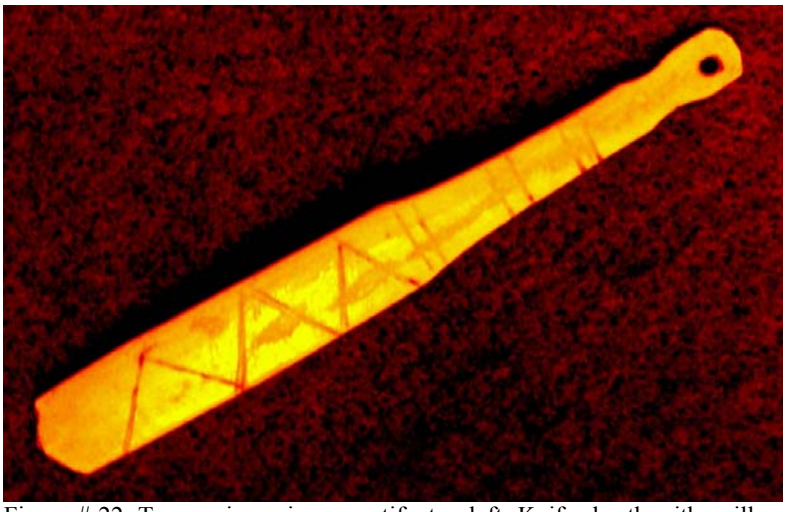


Figure # 22, Top: various zigzag motifs, top left: Knife sheath with quill embroidery zigzag, OLCM. Bottom: bone scratcher; Burke Museum 1019.

In Emmons' *The Tlingit Indians* we can find the connections:

> These designs of the Northern Geometric (Holm 1982; Samuel 1986) or Raven's Tail style (Samuel 1987) are clearly derived from those of Tlingit twine basketry... (Emmons 1991: 228)

And:

> Design in basketry was geometric, and constituted a noticeably fundamental exception to the characteristic art of the Tlingits, who, in carving, painting, and weaving in animal fabrics employed only realistic or symbolic animal figures, totemic in character and connected with their social organization. It would, therefore, seem reasonable that this geometric character of design was borrowed, and, as none of the neighboring people employ such figures in any of their work, we may go beyond to the Athapaskan porcupine quill embroidery. This was similar in simple figures, and was well known to the Tlingit through [a common?] origin, intermarriage, and trade.

> Possibly it was practiced by them to some degree, since old skin clothing ornamented with quill work was not uncommon among them. (Emmons 1991: 220-221)

In *The Tlingit Indians*, the editor, Frederica De Laguna, has made the following notes about the Tlingit basketry designs:

> [It could be better argued that the geometric designs of basketry were named for fancier resemblances to objects than that they intended to represent those objects. Of the designs figured by Emmons (1903), six were named for features of crests (Killerwhale teeth, Raven tail); twenty-seven for other animals or natural features (shark tooth, fern fronds); twenty-five for manufactured articles (labret, shaman's hat). (Emmons 1991: 222)

As it states above the Tlingit method of identifying the geometric patterns is based on a resemblance to objects rather than the representation of those objects. So they are more of an identification of different geometric patterns. That is to say, the Killerwhale teeth pattern is not representing the Killerwhale. I think that one of the primary reasons for the geometric patterns is the nature of the material originally used by the Yukon Athapaskans in the creation of the patterns on clothing, which is the porcupine quill. This material dictates a geometric design. I therefore believe that the Athapaskan quill work was almost totally decorative and the resulting patterns on Tlingit blankets, baskets and other items were also largely decorative. Also note that the material used for the creation of the Tlingit designs is spruce root for the baskets, goat wool for the blankets, and so forth, which resulted in geometric designs. Even after the introduction of new materials such as beads, Athapaskan people at first continued with the geometric designs using the beads instead of the porcupine quills. The beads were later used in the creation of the new floral designs that make up the Beaded Period. Below in figure # 23 is a set of hide clothing in the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka, Alaska.

Figure # 23. Zigzag breastband pattern on Athapaskan hide clothing; IV.B.4 SJM

The breastband pattern is a bold zigzag design created with large beads. The hide tunic was at first listed as interior Alaska; 'Unlocated Athapascan' but later was changed to 'Athapascan Porcupine River' which would make this Gwich'in. This is an example of a tunic that may be misidentified as I believe the tunic is from the south of the Yukon. The bold geometric pattern in the breastband is common in the south-central region and the hide is made of moose which was quite scarce in Gwich'in territory in the past. Furthermore, there were many other examples of south-central Yukon tunics in the coastal Tlingit region, because of all the trade. See Chapter Three-Hide Clothing to Dance Shirts for more information about tunic regional styles.

Outside the Yukon zigzag patterns can be found in many other cultures. In old Europe these patterns were used as far back as 7500 years ago. In Gimbutas' *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe,* she states about zigzags from around southeastern Europe:

> Stamped seals of this time period reveal the same tendency: almost all known seals are engraved with either straight lines, wavy lines or zigzags. Torrents of water shown as vertical zigzagging lines in separate panels depicted on early Vinča funnel-shaped vase may be related to the ritual of rain invocation. (Gimbutas 1992: 114-116)

And:

> The relationship between water and the bear is further indicated by bear-shaped cult vases, abundantly represented in the Danilo, Sesklo, Butmir and Lengyel cultures. The Danilo bear-shaped vases are solidly covered with belts of zigzags, chevrons and striated diamonds, symbolic of flowing water. (Gimbutas 1992: 116-119)

Note that these zigzags are incised into water vessels and this may be the basic connection between the water flowing and the vessel. The Yukon zigzags were placed on various items and therefore I do not think that they represented water. It is true that the Athapaskan geometric patterns were weaved on the Tlingit cooking baskets but these same geometric patterns were also used on the breastbands of clothing and the basket motifs are not zigzags as in the European examples. In the middle Yukon River area the Tanana, Koyukon and the Ingalik Athapaskans all created clay pots and decorated them with lines and the repeating dot motif but I did not see the use of the zigzag patterns on the pots.

Cross hatching & complex patterns

The cross hatching or cross cutting design was mostly put on tools and pendants. See figure # 24 for two examples of cross hatching. The first on left is an awl that is designed to drill holes into the frame of a pair of snowshoes, so the lacing can be threaded through. When I found out that these awls were used to drill holes into the frames of snowshoes for the lacing, I wondered if the cross hatching was a reflection of the intended task of the tool. Did it facilitate the webbing of the sinew for the snowshoes? The webbing would look like the cross hatching on the awl. Unfortunately, only the maker of this awl knows the reasons for the design. The next example of cross hatching is on a shaman's pendant which is part of a series of pendants. I will examine more pendants in later chapters. There is a wide range of designs on pendants and while no two pendants are alike cross hatching was one of the more common motifs used.


Figure # 24 crosshatching: Left: awl from the Klukshu Museum. Right: pendant from the CMC, JaVg-2:101

Cross hatching is sometimes related to the beaver. In the following image in figure # 25 is a carved wood spoon from the Museum of the North in Fairbanks, Alaska. This spoon was collected from the interior of Alaska by a teacher and collector, Rhonda Thomas. She lived in Alaska starting in 1937 and Fairbanks from 1957 until 1965. So this spoon is Athapascan and may be from the Fairbanks area and if so would make it a Tanana spoon.


Figure # 25, crosshatching on Beaver spoon, Athapascan. UA67-98-147. Museum of the North, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

While I did not find any cross hatching examples from the Yukon that definitely represented a beaver, the coastal Tlingits used cross hatching to represent beavers. The following is a coastal Tlingit visual representation of the traits of a beaver:

> Beaver-Large incisors, flat, crosshatched tail. In sculpture frequently grasping horizontal stick in paws, or biting stick. (Vancouver Art Gallery 1967: unnumbered pages)

It would be fair to say that at times cross hatching did represent beavers in Yukon since the cross hatching was done by groups at least to the south and west of the Yukon. So does the following spoon from Forty Mile Creek represent a beaver? This spoon, part of the National Museum of the Natural History Smithsonian collection is listed as collected by I.C. Russell from the Upper Yukon at Forty Mile Creek, Alaska. There is a Forty Mile River in Alaska

that empties out into the Yukon River. Since the description is "Upper Yukon" I am inclined to think that I.C. Russell is referring to The Settlement of Forty Mile on the Yukon River. In the late 19th and early 20th century many Americans thought that the Yukon was part of the United States and at times locations in the Yukon were identified as Alaskan. In any case, it is most likely a Han made spoon. See figure # 26 for four views of the spoon.

Figure # 26. Upper Yukon spoon with cross hatching. 153413 NMNH.

The wooden spoon is unique as it is partly made of geometric motifs such as a repeating cone design, as well as what appears to be floral designs on the inside and outside of the bowl part of the spoon. There is also a button in the center of the spoon. Because of the floral designs, which did not start until the Beaded Period after the introduction of beads into the region, as well as the button, it could not have been made before the very end of the 19th century. The cross hatching on this spoon is also quite interesting. Does it indicate a beaver?

The top circle of the spoon handle could be thought of as a beaver tail yet the diamond shaped cross hatching in the second circle does not appear to be a beaver tail. Does that part represent something else? There also appears to be a small four-direction symbol at the button in the center of the bowl part of the spoon. This is a good place to begin examining the four direction motif.

Four directions/crosses

The four-directions or cross symbol shows up on a variety of items such as spoons and moose calling scapulas, but they are mostly found on drums. See figure # 27 for two Tanana painted drum cross designs that incorporate variations of the four-directions. These are followed by a Southern Tutchone drum and a photograph of well known Tagish man Patsy Henderson with his drum. The first Tanana drum was collected by Professor Robert McKennan and given to the present collection at the Hood Museum of Art in Hanover, New Hampshire in 1929. The drum is made with moose hide. The bottom Tanana drum is from the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago and was made by Walter Northway from Northway, Alaska. It was collected by William Simeone and was purchased by the museum in 1981. The drum is listed as Tutchone and perhaps this is because Walter Northway's grandfather was Tutchone and the Northway's have Tutchone relatives in the Yukon. Walter Northway was born in the 1870s and lived to be well over one hundred years old. He spoke Upper Tanana therefore I identify this drum as Upper Tanana. Note that the four direction symbol is made up of a yellow cross in the center of the drum as well as a red line beside one of the yellow lines. This may be to make the four directions design fancier or it may have a greater significance. Around the edge of the drum are a series of three red bands. It was fairly common to have patterns painted around the outside edge of drums.

Figure # 27, Tanana four-direction drum designs: Left; Walter Northway drum. 30.2.4601 HMA. Right; Tanana design from Northway, Alaska. 1981.3509.270081 Field Museum.

The right drum in figure # 27 is a fairly complex four direction design. The center almost appears like a snow flake design with four patterns fanning out from the center. The patterns are split into colours; one side of each 'fan' is mostly red while the other is mostly black.

Figure # 28, Top; Southern Tutchone design from the KMNH. Bottom: Tagish drum owned by Patsy Henderson. Jean Robbie fonds 93/115R#3, YA.

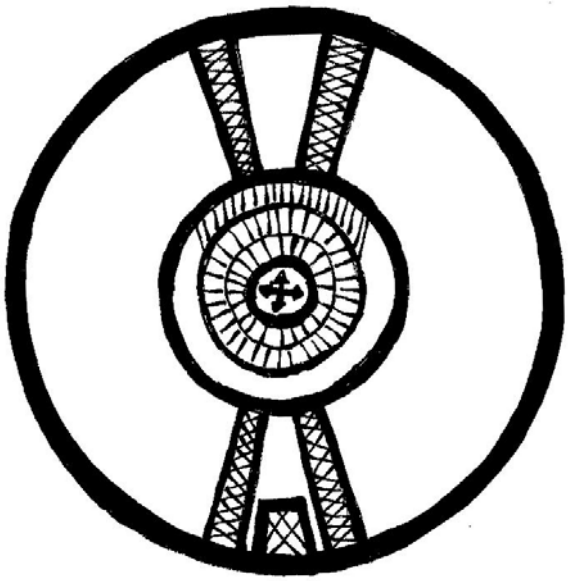
Note that the Tutchone drum in the left photograph of figure # 28 from the Kluane Museum of Natural History in Burwash appears to be the same as a four- pedal flower design seen in beadwork. Is there a relationship between the two? I have seen other examples of floral designs being painted or engraved. The drum in the right photograph is held by Patsy Henderson and also has a four directions design. While not exactly the same, another simple four- directions design can be seen on an early hide bag. This bag in figure # 29 was made by an Inland Tlingit woman in the early 20th century. The bag is now in possession of her granddaughter, Norma Shorty.

Figure # 29, Four direction design on hide bag. Norma Shorty collection.

While I could not find any reference to the significance of the four-direction designs from the Yukon, there are references to the significance of the number four. In *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* it is stated that the number four has a relation to the story of Crow creating the world after the flood:

> In this story, as in many Yukon Indian stories, nothing happens until the fourth request or fourth try. Many old-time rituals and other events were also ordered in sets of four. Some Indians believed that the emphasis on the number four, or eight, symbolized the ideal makeup of a whole person with two arms and two legs, each made of two large bones. Their worldview, like that of many other American Indians, stressed the number four. (McClellan 2001: 254)

I did come across a reference to a drum design of the Beaver people from Northern British Columbia. It has the four directions and the related meaning is recorded in the *Handbook of North American Indians*. See figure # 30 for my drawing of the drum design from that publication.



Figures # 30, Beaver drum design based on their creation story, Handbook of North American Indians, page 354. Drawing after Ridington and Ridington 1970:52: Ridington 1978: cover. 50

This is what is written about the story in the *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 6*:

> **Creation**
> The world took on its form when *ya ke sede,* 'heaven sitter', the creator, drew a cross on the water and sent down various animals to find land. When muskrat came up with a speck of dirt underneath his nails *ya ke sede* placed the earth at the centre of the cross on the water and told it to grow. The structure laid out in this creation story is the structure within which both the visionary experience and everyday reality took place. In it are laid out the cardinal directions and their point of intersection from which up and down, heaven and the underworld, future and past spring into being. (Helm 1981: 354)

This is a common myth across northwestern North America, known as the Earth-diver myth. In all the stories an animal dives down into the flooded earth and brings back dirt that can be spread onto the world. In the Yukon "Crow creates the world" versions, the dirt is spread out in all directions like a pancake and the four directions are not mentioned. I wonder if this part of the story is not mentioned because it is lost in time or maybe because for a First Nations person of the past, the four directions were obvious. When we look at a drum collected from Teslin Lake by D.D. Cairnes in 1911 for the then Museum of Man, what is described as an eagle in the middle seems to me to be Crow. See figure # 31 below. This may represent the creation story of Crow spreading the earth in all directions. This is an example of an unidentified bird being called an eagle because of the high regard for eagles held by many other North American Native groups. As stated already in the previous chapter the eagle did not hold the same status for the Yukon Athapaskan people in the past. This is an Inland Tlingit drum and even though the eagle is one of their clans, they much more often depicted the crow than the eagle. This bird is painted in black only and in the same manner of other Crow depictions done by Inland Tlingits. It also has a rather straight beak.

Figures # 31, Inland Tlingit bird drum design with four directions. VI-J-80 CMC.

Are the above cross images related to the four directions? Or are they an adoption of the Christian cross? I think the four directions and the older cross images are one of the same and that the cross motif became confused with the introduction of Christianity to Yukon First Nations. When Elder Marge Jackson saw the cross design on a sheep horn spoon she commented that the cross was around a long time ago and was Christ's cross. See figure # 32. Marge Jackson said that Jesus was here in the Yukon also. Many present day Elders easily mix First Nations spiritual beliefs with Christian beliefs, even as they are contradictory to us.

Figure # 32 cross design on sheep horn spoon from the CYFN collection.

Although this cross does not appear to be the same as the traditional Christian crucifix, but a design with a centre and equal arms going out in four directions, it does not stop Elders from making Christian connections. When Elders tell creation and many other traditional stories, they often comment about the similarity to bible stories. They make comments that Crow was like God or was Jesus. Also, when Crow changed into a piece of dirt or a pine needle to be drunk by the rich man's daughter, she became pregnant without a sexual encounter. The Elders comment that this is just like the Virgin Mary. Crow later is able to steal the sun and moon to give the world light and day.

First Nations people have blended traditional beliefs with Christian beliefs and this has contributed to the distortion or even the loss of traditional knowledge. This makes finding that traditional impression even harder. I think any incised images before World War Two would have little influence from Christianity. After World War Two, the connection with Christianity would have become stronger. This is excluding those artifacts that were made for the church by First Nations people who had adopted Christianity. In 1942 the Alaska Highway, Canol and Haines roads were built and by 1954 the Dawson Road was completed. These roads opened up the isolated settlements and assisted in the church clergy spreading their word and the mission schools obtaining students.

Of course the cross or four directions symbol was common throughout the world, including in Europe, long before the birth of Christianity. In *Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe* Marija Gimbutas writes:

> The cross, with its arms directed to the four corners of the cosmos, is a universal symbol created or adopted by farming communities in Neolithic and extending into present day folk art. It is based on the belief that the year is a journey embracing the four cardinal directions. Its purpose is to promote and assure the continuance of the cosmic cycle, to help the world through all phases of the moon and the changing seasons. (Gimbutas 1992: 89)

From all that I have found I can conclude that the cross or four directions motifs held deep meaning for Yukon First Nations people of the past.

Dot within a circle (Big Headed Starman motif) motif

This motif is one of the most common designs found in early Yukon First Nations art. It is most often depicted on spoons and ladles but can occasionally be found on other tools such as knives, awls and carved animal objects. There is even a pictograph of two in the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations traditional territory. See figure # 33 for this design and variations of the motif found throughout the Yukon.

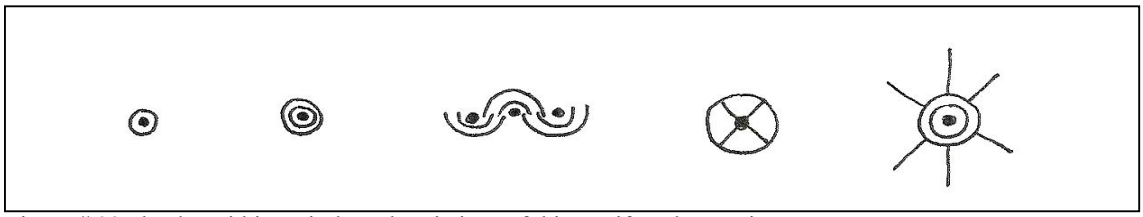


Figure # 33. the dot within a circle and variations of this motif. Uvk Drawing.

The neighboring Tlingits used these motifs sparingly, limited to petroglyphs and some spoons. George Emmons in *The Tlingit Indians* speaks about petroglyphs and shows various examples. In his drawing of the petroglyphs there are at least five examples that are exactly as, or close in design to, the Yukon circle within a circle motif. See figure # 34 for my adoption of Emmons' sketches.

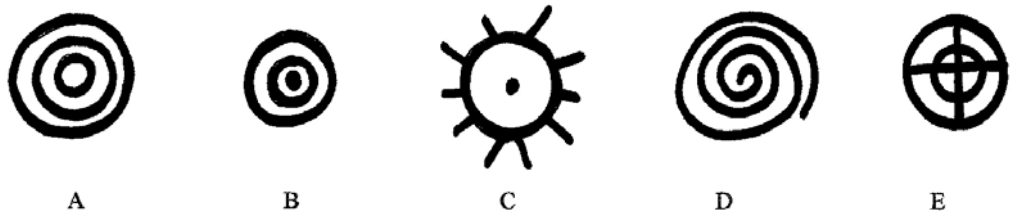


Figure # 34, adoption of George Emmons' sketches of petroglyphs in *The Tlingit Indians*, page 80. Uvk drawing.

A, B and C are described as being the sun. D is listed as a spiral and E is listed as a ceremonial rattle. I wonder if there is any relationship between the Tlingit sun petroglyths and the Tutchone Big Headed Starman motif. This may add proof to the circle within a circle being a celestial image. These petroglyphs are found throughout the Tlingit territory, yet Emmons could get little information about the origins and meanings.

On the confluence of the Alsek and the Tatsheshini River in the Southern Tutchone traditional territory in northwestern British Columbia are a couple of petroglyphs. They are located on a small island. The petroglyphs on the island are described as a "sun" figure. See figure # 35 for my renderings of the 'sun'. At the second site is what is thought of as a killer whale, which is hard for me to make out and I did not sketch this image.

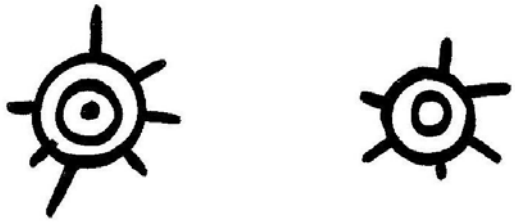
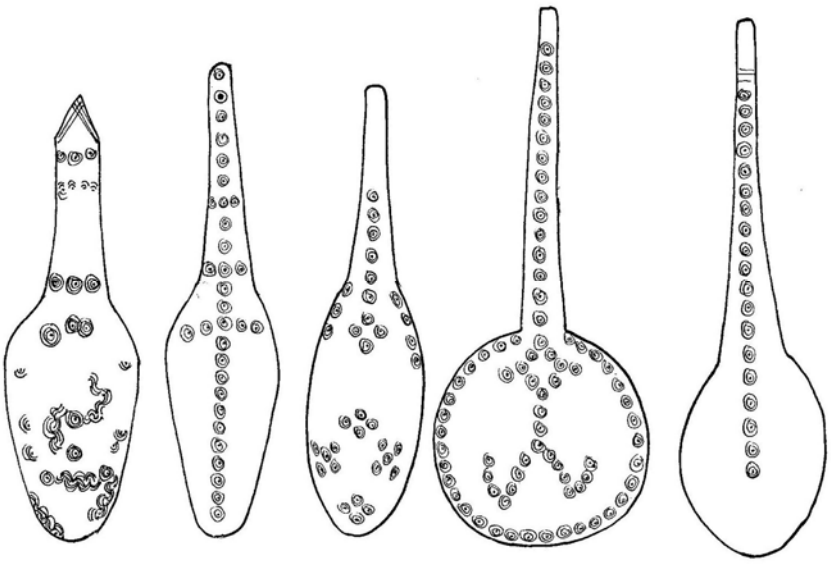


Figure # 35, sketches of petroglyphs on a small island at the confluence of the Alsek and the Tatsheshini rivers.

While at the southern edge of the Southern Tutchone, these "sun" petroglyphs may show a relationship to the circle within a circle found throughout the Yukon and may be linked to Emmons' "suns". These motifs and variations thereof show up on many items. See figure # 36 for some examples.

Figure # 36, snowshoe carving knife and awl from the Han people in the Royal Ontario Museum collection, 950-221-4 & 950-221-5 ROM. An artifact of unknown use from Fort Selkirk, Northern Tutchone territory. KeVe-1:1 CMC.

Besides the above items the motif most often showed up on spoons. See figure # 37 for examples of the dot within a circle motif applied to spoons in various patterns. Note that I have not come across two spoons with the same patterns, they are all unique.



A B C D E

Figure # 37, a variety of circle within a circle patterns on different spoons: left to right; A; Inland Tlingit VI-J-49 CMC. B; Han VI-F-5 CMC. C; Southern Yukon First Nation spoon, MacBride Museum, D; Possibly Yukon spoon CYFN E; Han spoon, DCM. UvK drawing.

When I asked Elders about the meaning of the dot within a circle motif and patterns they all responded with: "to make it fancy." None of the Elders recognized this motif as being anything other than a fancy design. Catherine McClellan does identify this motif as the Big Headed Starman in her book *My Old People Say*. I will discuss the Big Headed Star Man in more detail in Chapter Five-Figurative Art. This motif was mostly put on potlatch spoons and clearly was held in high regard. I also think the designs were a form of identification and of course each unique to the person who created it.

The spoon in Figure # 37A was purchased in 1911 at the Taylor and Drury store in Whitehorse by D.D. Cairnes and is listed as Inland Tlingit. The artifact catalogue card states: "Collector's note says 'potlatch spoon used for drinking grease at funeral ceremonies'." Some of these patterns are quite elaborate. The motif itself appears to be engraved with a hand carving tool or other engraving instrument, since the circles are not exact like the other dot & circle motifs. The spoon in figure # 37B is from the Canadian Museum of Civilization Museum and was collected by E.E. Stockton in Dawson City between 1901 and 1906. The spoon is listed as Han and is made from mountain sheep horn. The information card states: "The spoon would be carved by a man after the horn was softened by immersion in hot water. A person drank from the side of the spoon." The spoon in figure # 37C is on display at the MacBride Museum. There is no information on where this spoon came from. Because it is at the MacBride Museum, it is presumably Tutchone, Tagish or Inland Tlingit. Figure # 37D shows a spoon from the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) Collection. All the CYFN Collection was originally collected by the Anglican Church and they did not record who the maker was or where the items were collected, other than in their northern missionary areas. I cannot be more specific as to tribe. The last spoon in figure # 37E is in the Dawson City Museum collection and is Han. The dot and circle motif, or its variations, have also been used on bowls, all having different patterns, just like the spoons.

Bone knives

The two common types of bone knives were the gopher (ground squirrel) or small animal skinning knife and the dagger for bear defence. I will start off with the gopher skinning knives as they are the most decorated. There is a variety of designs applied to the skinning knives as a sign of individuality and identity. There may have been a number of women skinning gophers and everybody had their own identifiable knives. Many of these knives were also traded to the coastal Tlingits. On the notes of one of these knives in the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka is written 'Leather dresser' and as either Eskimo or Athapaskan. On the knife itself is written "Chilcat bone knife Presented by Sheldon Jackson". This would make this obviously Athapaskan and most likely a Tutchone bone knife because of the high level of trading between the Tlingits and Tutchone. I believe this since these knives are rare on the coast and very common in the interior. Those few examples that show up on the coast were traded in from the interior. These knives are also made from the leg bone of caribou which do not habitat the coastal areas. In the additional notes it states:
"Use: Scraping leather & crimping the upturned sole of mukluks." IV.X.35, SJM. As there are no gophers in Sitka and other areas of the Alaskan coast, the Tlingit woman might have used these knives for more than just skinning small animals, like working leather.

See figure # 38 of a bone knife on page 291 in *My Old People Say***.** In this gopher skinning knife there is a "repeating circle" pattern that goes down the center of the knife while the edges are engraved with repeating half-circles. This knife was collected by Catharine McClellan for the Canadian Museum of Civilization from Aishihik, a Southern Tutchone village in the Yukon.

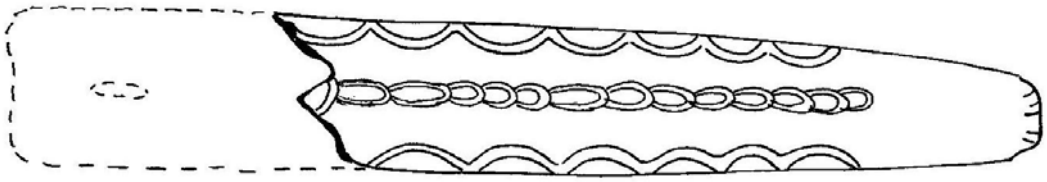


Figure # 38, gopher skinning knife. CMC. UvK drawing.

This repeating circle is also added to other items. In the following example the pattern is created with porcupine quills and added to a knife sheath. See figure # 39 below. The sheath is in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection and is listed as Loucheux (Gwich'in). It was originally collected by the Hudson Bay Company and was obtained by the museum from D.C. Ewing, a dealer. While the design is not identical they do look similar.

Figure # 39. Repeating circle design on Gwich'in knife Sheath. VI-I-73f CMC.

An example of another skinning knife that is in my personal collection can be seen in my drawing in figure # 40. I purchased this knife from an antique dealer in Whitehorse. She said the piece originally came from Carmacks (Northern Tutchone), Yukon Territory. This knife has a series of engraved lines coming out of the center line with a cross at the end of the pattern.

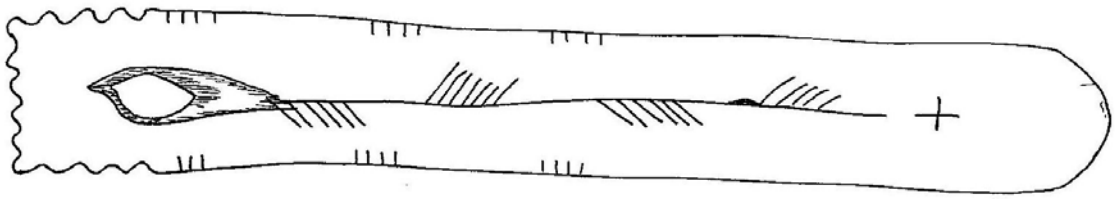


Figure # 41, Gopher skinning knife from the Carmacks area (Northern Tutchone). Ukjese van Kampen. UvK drawing.

In the next figure, # 42, is two examples from the Royal Ontario Museum that were originally collected from the Chilkat Tlingits in Alaska in the late 19th century. The Tlingits in turn received these knives in trade from the Tutchone sometime before that. The top knife is with a pattern that resembles the patterns on the breastbands of the hide clothing and on bone arm bands. For example, the pattern in figure # 67B on page 97 is of a Tutchone breastband and figure # 254 on page 249 is of a similar pattern on the left bone arm band.

This knife was collected around the Hootchi (Hutshi) River which is in the northern part of Southern Tutchone territory. Also note that the knife has what appears to be a floral design coming out of one end of the pattern and another (also floral?) motif at the other end. Maybe this is an example of a transition between the Geometric Period designs and the Beaded Period floral designs. The bottom knife also has a geometric repeating pattern. There is a series of small repeating cone motifs along the diagonal line on the grooved end of the knife.

Figure # 42. Tutchone gopher skinning knives; top: HK 2330, ROM. Bottom: HK 2329, ROM.

These are just a few of the many examples of gopher skinning knives in museum collections around North America and Europe. Each one is different with a wide variety of engraved designs.

In the Kluane Museum of Natural History there is another style bone knife; see figure # 43. This bone knife has a handle carved into it and does not have the same function as the gopher skinning knife. There are a number of these bone knives in the Glenbow Museum in Calgary. Elder Johnny Smith stated that they were used in defense against bears. They have blunt edges and cannot cut anything but are designed to stab. Johnny Smith said that they were attached to a pole and used to stab into the neck of the bear. They were attached to the pole in preparation for situations where bears may be an issue such as when women were berry picking. Berry picking is also a time when bears are eating berries. The women would go out in a group, talking loud and singing, which functioned as a bear deterrence. They would have the bone knives attached to poles, ready to defend against a charging bear. On an added note, metal knives were also attached to poles and became spears for bear defense as well as for warfare.

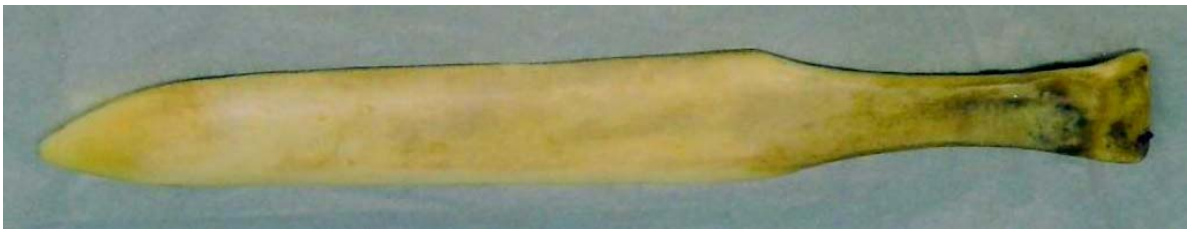


Figure # 43, bone knife for bear defense. 994.99, KMNH.

Baskets

Baskets were made throughout the Yukon and the two main materials for baskets making was birch bark and spruce roots. I will not go into detail about the various weaving and birch bark techniques but will briefly examine the decorations on the baskets. Birch bark baskets were made throughout the Yukon while it seems that spruce roots basket weaving was strongest with the Inland Tlingit and with the Han, both using different weaving techniques. People in other areas weaved spruce root baskets but to a lesser extent than the two mentioned groups.

Spruce Root Baskets

With the coiled spruce root method the weaver can create geometric patterns in the basket. These patterns are created by weaving areas in different colours. See figure # 44 of a basket at the MacBride Museum where the pattern is clearly visible. Like all First Nations items, some had no designs incorporated in the construction, such as the basket in the Dawson City museum. See figure # 45. This basket is more of a bowl and the angle gives an excellent picture of the weave that spirals out from the center.

It seems that originally the geometric patterns in spruce root baskets were started in the interior and were adopted by the coastal Tlingit. Emmons has documented Athapaskan origins to Tlingit basket motifs which originated with Athapaskan quill work designs. People who do Raven's Tail weaving have told me that the weaving patterns were also influenced from the interior.

Figure # 44, Decorated spruce root basket. MacBride Museum.

Figure # 45, Han coiled spruce root bowl. DCM.

A lot of the baskets were made for the tourist trade in Dawson City around the time of the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898 and afterwards. The next two examples are Inland Tlingit spruce root baskets. The Inland Tlingit made the finer woven baskets in the Yukon. The Coastal Tlingit woven baskets may have originated on the coast and found their way into the interior by trade or by women moving to the interior and carrying on with their basket making. The following two are in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection. The first was collected by D.D. Cairnes from the T&Ds store in Whitehorse during the summer of 1911. It is listed as made in Teslin and as Inland Tlingit. Judy Thompson noted that these baskets are made in the Coastal Tlingit style. In the *Handbook of Northern American Indians* on page 280 McClellan states that the Inland Tlingit examples were made by coastal woman who married interior men and brought techniques with them. The basket is made of spruce roots with a false embroidery using grass. False embroidery is a technique that is used to decorate twined baskets in which a third, colored weft element is incorporated into the outer wefts. These designs are not visible on the inside of the object. The false embroidery also slants in the opposite direction as the rest of the twining. See figure # 46.

Figure # 46, Teslin Inland Tlingit basket. VI-J-93 CMC.

The artifact catalogue states the following about four baskets that Cairnes collected, this being one of the four:

> 4 geometrically ornamented Indian baskets made in Teslin, "no other Indians in Yukon region are known to be able to make these baskets. They are said to have been used years ago for cooking purposes, water being heated with hot stones," Purchased from Taylor & Drury, Whitehorse, Y.T.

As we see the basket has three bands of geometric designs, the top two bands having alternate squares and diamonds. The motifs are colored blue, beige and red. The bottom band has a series of horizontal rectangles.

The second basket in figure # 47 is also from Teslin. It was collected by Clement Lewis from Teslin Lake sometime before December 1912. The catalogue artifact card states:

> Spruce roots are gathered by women in spring, heated and stripped then left to cure over the summer. After being soaked, they are split longitudinally and pith discarded

the lustrous outer strip being used for the weft. Grass for embroidery is gathered in early summer and bleached in boiling water or hot sand. The grasses hang in strips to dry, and are later dyed as desired.

Figure # 47, Teslin Inland Tlingit basket. VI-J-90, CMC.

The basket has four bands with an alternating motif sometimes referred to as a "wave pattern" and has a triangle in each space. Each triangle is pointed up except for the bottom band where every second triangle is pointed down. The main colors are red and black and the others are blue and yellow.

Birch bark baskets

Birch bark baskets were used throughout the Yukon. They were constructed in one of two main styles. The first and most common style was the folded basket. The second was a rolled or round style. See figure # 48 and # 49 for a folded birch bark basket from the MacBride Museum and a Han basket from the Dawson City Museum. Both these baskets have a zigzag pattern incorporated in the collar around the top.

Figure # 48, Southern Yukon First Nations birch bark basket. 1973.1.97.1 MacBride Museum.


Figure # 49, Han birch bark basket. DCM.

Below is the second common style, the round basket seen in figure # 50. This basket from the Dawson City Museum is taller and narrower, as it has to be since it uses only one strip from a birch tree. There is the common zigzag pattern collar around the top and this basket also has fringes hanging down from four points around it. This basket is not folded but stitched at a joining seam. The bottom is a separate piece, stitched with spruce root firming the base.


Figure # 50, round tall birch bark basket. DCM.

These baskets have been around for a long time and are still made in some communities. See figure # 51 of an early photograph of First Nations women with birch bark baskets in the Han village of Moosehide, just down river from Dawson City, Yukon. When the Southern Tutchone Elders saw this photograph they immediately said that the women were going berry picking. They also recognized the ladies but could not remember their names. In *Han: People of the River* on page 72 the caption of the same photograph identified the woman on the left as Henry Harper's wife. On page 71 of the same book it is written:


Figure # 51, Han woman berry picking, MacBride Coll. Vol. 2. 3873, YA.

> Mary McLeod of Dawson City told Richard Slobodin that people picked berries in the late summer, cleaned them thoroughly, and packed them in birchbark baskets sewn with spruce roots. The baskets were then stored in underground caches and covered with willow branches and moss. Later, after it had snowed, someone was sent to retrieve the baskets and, according to Willie Juneby, the berries tasted just as fresh as when they were picked. (Mishler & Simeone 2004: 71)

These baskets do not have the zigzag collar around the top. In casual conversation I have been told that, on occasion, birch bark baskets have decoration applied to them. The Elders confirmed that at times baskets were decorated. With careful examination it appears that the basket that the woman on the right is holding has a pattern slightly less than half way up. It seems to be a series of "xxxx" motifs and may have been produced by bark biting or some other method. This is the only example of a pattern that I have seen on birch bark baskets.

Babiche & other hunting bags

Bags were an important item for First Nations people. Being semi-nomadic, bags were required for carrying tools and possessions. Not all bags were decorated. The most common bag to be decorated was the fire bag. This only makes sense since a fire is the center piece of a camp. It provides warmth and is used for cooking, protection and companionship. This bag was often small, with enough room to carry everything for making a fire: dry tinder and flint. There were also hunting bags to carry small game. These game bags were made of babiche and thus called babiche bags. The babiche bag didn't take up much room but had the

ability to carry a large load. There were also general purpose bags, sled bags, ochre pouches, and many other special purpose bags but in this section I will only focus on the hunting bags.

Babiche bags were netted lengths of raw or slightly tanned hide and were decorated in various ways. At the Canadian Museum of Civilization I examined two bags. The first bag is of Inland Tlingit design collected by Clement Lewis and was delivered to the National Museum of Canada (now Canadian Museum of Civilization) on December 19, 1912. In figure # 52 the bag has an undecorated top except for four sets of fringes that have either swan or duck claws sewn at the top of the fringes. The bag itself has three red horizontal painted lines that span the length of the bag.

Figure # 52, Inland Tlingit babiche bag. VI-J-7, CMC.

The next bag shown in figure # 53 is Kaska and was collected by J.A. Teit in 1912. The catalogue card does not state where this bag was collected but Teit got a lot of the Kaska artifacts from Dease Lake, B.C. At first appearance this bag looks rather plain with only the sewn red and dark blue fabric along the top. However, if you read what is written on the collector's notes on the artifact catalogue card you will get more information:

> Game bag woven of babiche. The front edge of the mouth is ornamented with red and blue cloth pinked to form a design. Ornamentation also occurs in the weaving by using darker, and lighter babiche, and by making the coils or meshes closer, and further apart. Also by twisting the babiche around itself (as in Plate 129, Mason Basketry) The Tahltans do not make these bags.

You can see that the maker incorporated definite patterns for decoration. I have not seen this on other bags, the exception being the babiche bag I examined in the Dawson City Museum.

Figure # 53, Kaska babiche bag. VI-H-15, CMC.

There was little information on the babiche bag in Dawson City. See figure # 54 for a front and back view. Although it is hard to see, there appears to be one slightly larger spaced row just at the blue bead level on the bag. I cannot tell if this is intentional or if it was just the way it was stretched after being finished. Compared to the previous two babiche bags, this one is quite decorated. There are more embroidered designs along the top with two sections; the uppermost being a zigzag pattern, while the bottom part is of a floral design. The bottom half of the bag has a series of mostly white tassels in the top row, followed by mostly red tassels with areas of white mixed in. The last and bottom row is mostly red with some touches of white. Like most babiche bags, the back side is undecorated.

Figure # 54, front and back view, Han babiche bag. 1978.1.648, DCM.

Most babiche bags are approximately twice as wide as deep but sometimes the dimensions vary depending on the intentions of the maker of the bag.

The next bag in figure # 55 is also used for hunting. It is the hide or fur hunting bag. Most of these bags were simple but this following example is made out of tanned hide as well

as strips of fur. This bag is on display at the MacBride Museum and is listed as "Hunting bag for supplies". This bag was made by sewing a series of strips of fur together. There are a series of fringes with beads along the center and bottom of the bag. There is no flap or beadwork on this bag.

Figure # 55, fur stripped hunting bag. MacBride Museum.

There were a number of other bags that Yukon First Nations made and I will examine various other bags in the coming chapters. Examples of other bags are octopus bags in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death and beaded bags in Chapter Four-Beaded & Floral Designs.

Dentalia

An important item to make clothing and other objects fancy was the dentalia shell. Interior people obtained these shells through trade from the Coastal Tlingits. The shells were popular and a sign of status. In the coming chapters you will see dentalia shells in the breastbands of clothing, on puberty drinking tubes, necklaces, belts and added to other items such as puberty hoods, knife sheaths, etc. The following is from *My Old People Say*:

> Even today Southern Yukon natives consider dentalia to be the mark of a higher-class person or chief, and the Northern bands of Southern Tutchone, who had the most contact with the Han, Kutchin and Upper Tanana natives, seemed to value them most highly. (McClellan 2001: 317)

The value of dentalia shells may stem from their rarity as their only source seems to be the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia. The trade route for the dentalia shells would start with the Haida trading with the Tlingits who traded in their turn with the Southern Tutchone. Next, they would trade it to the Tanana and Northern Tutchone and in turn they would trade the shells to the neighbouring people until the shells would make their way into Gwich'in territory and beyond. The Hudson Bay Company also began importing the dentalia shells to their trading posts. The use of dentalia shells on girl's puberty hoods is described in *My Old People Say*:

> Decorations were often very elaborate, for fond "paternal aunts" vied with each other to load the bonnets with dentalia and other beads so that their nieces' slightest motion resulted in delicious tinkling sounds which also warned off hunters. In each tribe, too, sometimes black feathers, usually from the crow, hung down from the back of the hood to ensure the wearer a life-long head of jet black hair." (McClellan 2001: 311)

Dentalia shells were also used as personal jewelry, as in the case of a Southern Tutchone dentalia choker that can be seen in the Klukshu Museum. See the top image in figure # 56. Besides chokers the shells were often used in belts that were made in the same manner as the choker but longer. Sometimes the belts were made fancier, as is the case with the belt in the National Museum of Natural History in Washington DC. This is a Tahltan made fancy belt shown at the bottom image in figure # 56.

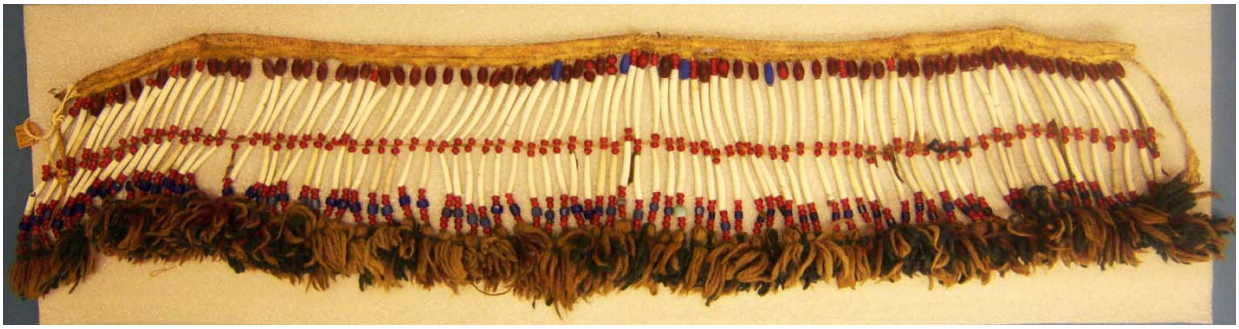


Figure # 56 top: Southern Tutchone dentalia choker. Klukshu Museum. Bottom: Tahltan fancy dentalia belt. 248519, NMNH.

Also in the National Museum of Natural History on the left in figure # 57 is a dentalia shell decorated knife sheath. This sheath is elaborately decorated and would have been a highly valued item. It is listed as Han so would have come from the Upper Yukon River area. In # 55 on the right is a dentalia necklace from the Field Museum in Chicago. The dentalia necklace is from the Tanacross people in eastern Alaska who border the Han people.


Figure # 57, Left: Han dentalia knife sheath. T1843, NMNH. Right: Tanacross dentalia necklace. 1982.3534.270135, Field Museum.

A final dentalia shell example is a Tahltan necklace below in figure # 58. This is a dentalia neck ring and it was worn for a year by a young woman who was entering maturity. It was collected by George Emmons in the upper Stikine River in 1909.

Figure # 58, Tahltan neck puberty ring. 2705, Burke Museum.

Besides the traded dentalia, abalone was also a popular item and was acquired through trade from the coastal Tlingits. There is little information on past use but the examples I have seen are abalone inlaid into a tool or other artifact. In the Yukon they are quite a bit rarer than dentalia shells.

Painting

In this section I will discuss the history of paints used by Yukon First Nations. Paint was used to enhance engravings by being rubbed into the lines of the tools and weapons and to create images on drums, arrow quivers and clothing. Paint was used for decorating the face for celebrations, mourning, war and berry picking. Painting was also used as a medium for preserving items. The majority of the painted images are in red, made from a mixture of red ochre and grease, pitch and/or water. There are some examples of black paint and rare references to blue and blue-green paints. In *The Kaska Indians*, after mentioning the use of red earth for paint, it is stated:

> Pieces of bone, painted red and blue (blue-green color confusion obtained among the Kaska as among many American Indians) hung from coats. Blue pigment, obtainable in the vicinity of Pelly Banks, was mixed with grease or, to "really make it stick," with balsam pitch. Black paint, the color that completed the aboriginal palette, also came from the earth but appears to have been little employed for clothing decoration. (Honigmann 1964: 65)

As we will see, red ochre was the paint of choice therefore I will first take a closer look at red ochre. I will next discuss charcoal, followed by the painted motifs and designs themselves. As to the use of blue-green paint, other than what is stated above, I did not find any other reference to the pigments used for making this colour. This may be because of the rare use of blue-greens before the introduction of trade paints.

Red ochre

Red ochre is obtained from the earth in what is called "Si-pits" (pronounced See-pits) by some Tutchone. Red ochre has to be sought out and prepared. It was used for a wide variety of roles, such as face painting and decoration for berry picking or ceremonies, painting tools, snowshoes and weapons, rubbing into snares to prevent stretching, and coloring and waterproofing clothing and hides. In *My Old People Say,* McClellan states:

> Ochre was prepared by burning lumps of either red or yellow earth. The red colour was applied by dampening a twig or one's finger and dipping it into a skin of powdered ochre. (McClellan 2001: 320)

Although I have not come across any mention of Tutchone methods of collection of red ochre in *My Old People Say*, McClellan does say this about Tlingit collections methods:

> The person who takes the paint should leave a small gift of beads or some other item at the place where it is dug out. (McClellan 2001: 320)

The only written reference I found to red ochre sources is in Julie Cruikshank's *Reading Voices*, where she mentions the Nisling and Donjek Rivers. (Cruikshank, 28) I inquired locally about red ochre sources and collection methods. I have been told by Elders of two local places where red ochre can be found. One is on a small mountain known as "Look-Out Mountain" or Nalin about twenty miles north-west from Whitehorse. The other is on Tatchun Creek, about twenty miles north of Carmacks along the Klondike Highway, and then about three miles in from the highway. I have yet to locate these places. When I asked Elder Gary Sam about additional sites, he inquired what I wanted to do with the "Indian paint". I

told him I wanted to paint with it and he then informed me of the procedures of collecting. I was to sing a prayer, which he sang for me. Since this was an informal conversation, I did not record it and do not remember how it went. In addition he sang the song in Northern Tutchone, which I do not speak. After the prayer, I was to collect the Indian paint and then leave an offering. This could be tobacco, money or other valued object. (Sam, personal communication 2004) Once the ochre is prepared it is stored in a paint bag as seen in figure # 6 on page 31.

I have heard in casual conversation that ochre itself was used in ceremonial prayer, but have not learned more. It is clear that in the south-central Yukon and other areas, red ochre played an important part in creating visual imagery. In Jessie Jonathan's story "Äsùya and the Big Worm" (Äsùya is Beaverman) we learn where red ochre comes from. Äsùya kills the big worm and the red Ochre comes from its blood.

> When the big worm was half way out of the den, Äsùya ran and jumped down on it. With the blade of his biggest spear, he cut off the head. Then he chopped up the worm into pieces and threw them out into space, saying, "Turn into rocks." That is how red ochre was made, from the big worm's blood. That is what they used for painting snowshoes. After the flesh of the worm had turned into ochre, he scraped some of it into his little bag. (Yukon Native Language Centre 2000: 98)

Another interesting point is the connection that the Athapaskans had to the other world, the sky or space. Besides the many stories that involve space such as the Big Headed Starman, the Two Sisters who Married the Starman and Crow Creating the World, we now have Äsùya hurling the flesh of the Big Worm into space, whose blood is red ochre. Also in space are the northern lights, and it is only the red northern lights which are a concern for people. For the three Southern Yukon tribes, the Tutchone, Tlingit and Tagish, the northern lights, if red, were a sign of trouble. It meant that a war was coming or lots of people were going to die. If there was a little bit of red, then one person was going to die a violent death. They believed that the northern lights were people who died violent deaths and now played in the sky. The Tagish could try and avert disaster by blowing the lights away with their breath and hands while shouting a war cry (McClellan 2001: 79). Other people say that you shouldn't whistle at the lights or you will be bothered. Also, when in bed, sleep sideways, for if you sleep facing up the lights will come down and burn you (Smith, J, personal communication. 2004). I wonder if there is a relationship between red ochre and the red from the northern lights. Both demand a high level of respect. I think all these points indicate the unique status of red ochre.

Charcoal

Charcoal is also used for painting, but in very limited quantities for most of the Yukon Athapaskans. It may have been mainly the Inland Tlingits who used it. It does not seem to hold the status of red ochre, perhaps because of the ease of obtaining charcoal from any fire place, while red ochre is only obtainable from certain locations. Yet in Julie Cruikshank's *Reading Voices* it is mentioned that there is a source of charcoal located at Takaadi T'ooch, just to the west of Carcross in the Tagish traditional territory. Takaadi T'ooch is Tlingit for "charcoal rockslide". I do not know the extent of the use of this charcoal. Charcoal from the fire does have some special properties, as ash and charcoal were often used in rituals involving death. Bits of charcoal were tied as amulets to children and also placed in houses to keep ghosts away, since ghosts were scared of charcoal:

> Soon after a death, all close relatives in the sib of the deceased should have their hair cut by someone in the opposite moiety, although this is rarely done today. However, bits of charcoal are still often tied as amulets on children who lost a parent. 'They claim the ghost is scared of charcoal, I don't know why.' The children must wear it until the funeral is over and the danger of ghosts is lessened. Sometimes charcoal is put in the corners of a house if occupants seem to be bothered by the ghost of the person who has just died. (McClellan 2001: 373)

Another reason for the greater use of ochre over charcoal may be the staining and/or holding nature of red ochre. When I asked Gary Sam why red ochre was used far more than charcoal, he said that charcoal washed away easily. It is true that red ochre was used to waterproof clothing. In *My Old People Say*, McClellan states:

> In the early days, the red ochre which was rubbed into the hides seems to have the same effect as a good smoking. The skins treated with it were fairly waterproof, and did not stretch or harden if they did get wet.

McClellan goes on to add:

> This was probably due in part to the grease with which the ochre was mixed. Moosehide lines of gopher snares are still treated with red ochre so they do not shrink or stretch in the damp. (McClellan 2001: 260)

Red ochre was used to protect and waterproof many items and therefore used a great deal, while the use of charcoal remained limited. In *My Old People Say*, McClellan writes this about charcoal:

> Powdered charcoal served for black. People used to dip their fingers into the powder and then touch their finger tips all over their faces to make dots. Men used black for war party paint, and occasionally as a sign that they are angry, but black can also be used for festive face painting. For Potlatches, peace ceremonies, and the like, a person might put on either black or red or both. (McClellan 2001: 320)

Honigmann, speaking of the Kaska Indians, mentions the use of black paint obtained from earth:

> Black paint, the color that completed the aboriginal palette, also came from the earth but appears to have been little employed for clothing decoration. (Honigmann 1964: 65)

This may be the same type of charcoal that is found at Takaadi T'ooch.

Items painted

During my research I came across many things that were painted. The paint often had practical reasons such as waterproofing and preventing the stretching of hides, but it was also used for esthetic reasons. The painted items I have listed are either Tutchone, or from all three tribes in the survey that McClellan completed for *My Old People Say*: the Southern Tutchone, Tagish and Inland Tlingit:

1) “Some Southern Tutchone women rub the snare lines with red ochre so they will not stretch in the rain.” Page 158.
2) On Southern Tutchone women, while berry picking: “They also painted their faces with red ochre, apparently just to be in keeping with the general festive mood.” Page 200.
3) On Southern Tutchone gravehouses: “Painted trim, if any, is of red ochre paint.” Page 249.
4) On Southern Tutchone adzes: “They reported that the thin strips of moose hide lashing and the wood on which the head rests were painted with red ochre.” Page 254.
5) On Southern Tutchone women’s change of techniques in tanning hides: “Another hint that the skin-tanning process has changed over the past few centuries is the statement made by Southern Tutchone women that in the old days nobody smoked skins to a brown colour; instead they were liberally rubbed with red ochre.” Page 256.
6) About snowshoes: “Most men still paint at least part of the frames with red ochre...The only reason given for the use of the ochre is that it makes the snowshoes “fancy”.” Page 276.
7) On arrow shafts: “Before they were to be attached (feathers), the shafts were painted with red ochre to a little below the bottoms of the bindings.” Page 283.
8) On trail markers: “...an upright stick painted black means that there has been a death in the party.” Page 294.

As we can see from the above list, many things were painted with red ochre and had a functional purpose. In the coming chapters, and especially in Chapter Five-Figurative Art, I will examine the images that have been painted to represent people, animals or scenes.

Closing comments

In this chapter I have familiarized you with the general forms of Yukon First Nations geometric art. I have given examples of items on which this art was represented and discussed the use of paint. This is not an exhaustive list. Some items have been left out and many I will discuss later in this dissertation. Many of these other objects had the same style motifs and patterns. Artifacts decorated with geometric designs that are mentioned in later chapters are bone arm bands and ritual drinking tubes in Chapter Six-Art of Rituals & Shamans and war clubs in Chapter Seven-Art of the Hunt & War. You will also be exposed to geometric designs that have been found on objects such as hats, clothing and footwear.

Chapter Three-Hide Clothing to Dance Shirts

In this chapter I will start off examining hide clothing. I will mainly be looking at breastband designs and also attempt to identify the tunic's regional origin. Once I have discussed the tunics from various regions I briefly write about the changing style of the tunics and breastbands as contact with the white people became more common. I will then look at various other upper body garments, such as later style hide jackets and dance shirts. This chapter does not give an exhaustive list but a general overview. There may be unique personal and regional examples of hide clothing and dance shirts that do not 'fit' into my descriptions. This is because of styles being copied or exchanged through the trading activities as well as styles moving into new areas because of people marrying with a person of that new region.

I will be focusing on the style of the breastband as a form of regional identification. The book *Fascinating Challenges* by Judy Thompson, Judy Hall and Leslie Tepper, in collaboration with Dorothy K. Burnham is an excellent reference to the different cut styles between the Tanaina (Dena'ina) and Gwich'in clothing. Judy Thompson's research on the two cut styles has allowed her to identify with certainty if the tunic is Dena'ina or Gwich'in. I examine the differences of the details of the tunic with a focus on the breastband patterns from various groups of people. By noting the similarities of tunics from one group of people I reveal the differences with other groups of people. I will start with the Dena'ina and Gwich'in because of the more certain provenance. Later I look at the southern Yukon tunics. I thus add the "Southern Yukon" tunic style.

Tunic breastbands

I have found that in all the collections I have examined the tunics are one of the most collected and representational artifacts of our culture. In fact, the tunic breastbands give us a large inventory of decorative arts. Judy Thompson in *Fascinating Challenges* reports that there are over 150 examples of tunic and moccasin-trousers in museums collections in North America and Europe. These tunics were collected from the western Northwest Territories, northern British Columbia and Yukon, interior and the southeastern coastal areas of Alaska. In some cases the tunics and moccasin-trousers were collected second hand from a middle man. For instance, southern Yukon tunics were traded to the coastal Tlingits, then on to white traders and explorers. As far as I know there is not a single southern Yukon tunic that was collected in the southern Yukon! In other areas the tunics were collected directly from the regional group of people. For example, the Russian America Company collected regional tunics during the course of their trade operations starting in the late 1700s until Russia sold Alaska to the United States in 1867. And the Hudson Bay Company collected many tunics directly over the course of their trading operations in the Northwest Territories, northern Yukon and interior Alaska.

The Tlingits had a very established trade system with the people of the south-central Yukon. The items traded from the Yukon to the Tlingits were such things as copper, hides, bone tools, ritual items, dolls and hide clothing. There are many old drawings of coastal Tlingits wearing what is obviously interior made clothing. This is what Annie Ned says about the past when the coastal Tlingits wanted interior clothing:

> "Yukon people are hunting, and they've got nice skin clothes--Oh, gee, porcupine quills, moose skins, moccasins! Everything nice.
> Coast Indians saw those clothes and they wanted them! That's the way they found out about these Yukon people. Right then, they found where we hunted. Coast Indians

> traded those knives, axes, and they got *nothing*, those Tlingit people, just cloth clothes, groundhog clothes. Nothing! Goat and ground-hog, that's all." (Cruikshank 1990: 280)

Since the Interior clothing was superior to the coastal made clothing it was in demand by the coastal Tlingits and was a big part of early trade up till the time that furs came in demand. The demand for furs started when the white traders had established contact and developed trade relations with the Tlingits. The trade for hide clothing did carry on for a while and hide tunics were traded on from the Tlingits to white people. Those traded tunics that were originally from the southern Yukon made their way into museum collections. Because they were traded via the middleman Tlingit traders, these articles of clothing often were identified as either Tlingit or interior and given no indication as to more precise interior location. An example of the lack of identification can be seen on a didactic panel in front of a set of Athapaskan clothing at the Anchorage Museum in figure # 59:

> This set of heavily bead-decorated clothing was probably made in Alaska or northwestern Canada, although it is difficult to discern stylistically which group made it. (99.077.001ae, Anchorage Museum)

Figure # 59. 99.077.001ae, Anchorage Museum

The original hide tunics and dresses followed mostly the same pattern, that is, the man's garment was a pull-over and came to a point at the bottom front and back and a woman's garment was generally straight at the bottom, except in the western part of Alaska where the women sometimes wore dresses with the pointed front and back. The men's tunics had a decorated breastband across the chest while this was less the case for women's dress. In the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka, in the artifact notes for a man's moose hide tunic that is listed as interior Alaska, the purpose of the tunic design is described as follows:

> Pointed shirt is long to protect legs, going through the bush, provides protection, sitting down, gives protection from wind to vital areas of the body, lets water drip down the center, not down the legs; decoration adds weight to keep shirt down in wind. (George Lewis, Sitka) IV.X.1 a,b. SJM.

See figure # 60 below for the set of clothing on display at the Sheldon Jackson Museum. Note what I wrote about the geometric zigzag pattern in the breastband in Chapter Two-Geometric & Decorative Arts shown in figure # 23 on page 57.

Figure # 60. Men's Athapaskan hide clothing. IV.X.1 a,b. SJM.

While all men's tunics had the same outward pattern, the breastband designs were all different. People tended to make the breastbands in a local style and thus the breastband patterns can help to identify the region where the tunic was made. When examining the tunic and breastband I try to answer questions like: How wide is the breastband? How complex and colourful are the patterns within the breastband? How are the fringes dealt with? What type of pattern goes from the collar area to the breastband? I also look at the sleeve cuffs. Are they decorated? How about the painted lines of the tunic and is there any fur showing? Are there additional parts added such as breastbands and fringes on the back? By looking at these areas of the tunic I am sometimes able to identify general regional styles. In some areas a regional style is easier to detect, such as for the Dena'ina (also known as the Tanaina), while in other areas there seems to be a blending of styles between regions. Once you take into

account intermarriage between groups and even just a mixing of ideas, the regional styles can become even more blurred. The Gwich'in breastbands tend to have common traits within their region and there also seems to be a general southern Yukon and northern British Columbia breastband style. This is a vast subject that would require more research and is beyond the focus of this book, but I will give comparisons of different breastband styles from the three main regions as well as from some of the neighbouring areas. Please note that, like all other art forms from the Athapaskan regions, there are always exceptions and variations. While the Tanaina are quite a distance from the Yukon region their breastbands and clothing patterns are a good place to start when discussing the differences between regions. This is because their clothing has a distinct appearance and generally the same style of breastband designs

Tanaina breastband designs

See figure # 61 for four examples of Dena'ina breastband designs. The provenance for collecting artifacts of the Dena'ina is generally good. Many of the tunics were collected by the Russian American Company during their trading operations in Alaska.

A 

B 

C

D

Figure # 61. Four Dena'ina tunics. A) Ethnologisches Museum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin IV 9386. B) National Museum of Finland VK 175. C) National Museum of Finland VK 168. D) Ethnologisches Museum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin IV 9086.

The breastband patterns above use muted earth colours in a narrow band. The patterns are a series of repeating motifs of geometric designs often spaced by lighter coloured gaps. There is a sepia type colour with brown patterns over a lighter tan colour and this breastband is mounted on a very lightly smoked hide and thus showing a light cream, off- white colour. The patterns themselves are very geometric in nature using small blocks or lines of colour. Some of the blocks of colour are made up of a series of smaller patterns themselves. Many of the tunics collected from this area appear to be slightly longer in design than tunics farther to the east and south. While only one tunic (A) is showing a breastband that goes straight across the chest and not a shallow "V" type pattern, there are many examples of other Dena'ina tunics with the breastband in similar configuration. Tunic A is a woman's garment and was originally collected by the Russian American Company. It has fringes that were cut out of a strip of hide in quite wide sections. Note that the other tunic fringes are narrower and are decorated with either silverberry seeds or with wrapped porcupine quills. It is not uncommon for the Dena'ina to use the wide undecorated fringes on the woman's garments and I have not seen examples of this in other groups. Nor have I seen the wide fringes on Dena'ina men's

tunics. All the Dena'ina women's garments I examined have straight bottoms while all the men's tunics have pointed front and backs. You will also see fur collar on the garments in examples A & B. Tunic B was donated to the National Museum of Finland in 1846 and was originally collected by the Russian American Company. In example C is a series of painted lines, which occurs on occasion. It seems that the Dena'ina preferred to leave that area above the breastband clear of decoration. While Judy Thompson in *Fascinating Challenges* states that from the 1880s Dena'ina started using beads in their breastbands, the only example I have seen of the Dena'ina using beads on their hide clothing is from the Alaskan State Museum in Juneau. In the interior of the Yukon, First Nations people were using beads on their clothing as early as the 1840s without any direct contact with white people. With the Dena'ina already having almost a century of direct contact with white traders and only starting to use beads in the 1880s, there must have been a reluctance to switch from porcupine embroidery to beading.

Gwich'in breastband designs

In contrast to the Dena'ina designs are the Gwich'in. The three breastband patterns in figure # 62 A, B & C all have broader breastbands and are filled with very colourful geometric patterns. The breastbands also do not always go straight across the chest but, as in A and B, have two 'peaks' of the breastband at both sides of the chest, creating a bit of a wave effect. The patterns themselves do not always have the set spaces between geometric patterns but have a continuous geometric pattern such as in figure # 62 A & B. Figure # 62C's pattern incorporates the white colour areas as part of the whole pattern and these lighter coloured areas are not gaps between the geometric patterns as in the Dena'ina examples. It does appear that the breastband pattern in figure # 63 does use the lighter areas as a space between the geometric patterns. There are three embroidered strips traveling down from an embroidered area at the collar front.

Tunic # 62A is from the Canadian Museum of Civilization and has on the label "H.B.Co." "Loucheaux". As mentioned earlier, the early name to identify the Gwitch'in was Loucheaux. Kutchin is also an earlier term for the Gwich'in people. Tunic # 62B is from the Royal Ontario Museum and was collected by Frank Wilson who was the factor of Fort Vermillion which is in northern Alberta, quite south of Gwich'in territory. The tunic was likely traded south as the style appears to be very much Gwich'in to me. Tunic # 62C is from the National Museum of Nature History at the Smithsonian in Washington DC. It is identified as Kutchin and was collected on the Yukon River. It was part of the Bernard Ross collection. Compared to the other two tunics, Tunic C has a slightly thinner breastband with a less noticeable 'wave'. But when I compare Tunic C in # 62 to other tunics that have been identified as Loucheux from other collections that originated from the Hudson Bay Company, such as the man's summer outfit in figure # 63, they look alike.

The outfit in figure # 63 is in the Royal Scottish Museum and was collected by Bernard Ross from Fort Simpson. Fort Simpson is not in Kutchin territory but is in the Athapaskan group Slavey's territory. Fort Simpson was a Hudson Bay trading post built in 1822 and is on the banks of the Mackenzie River, the main trading route connecting the north to the southern major Hudson Bay Company's trading forts such as Fort Resolution and Fort Chipewyan. Because Fort Simpson was on the major trading route in northern Canada and Bernard Ross was a major collector in the 1860s the tunic could have easily been obtained by Ross in Fort Simpson or elsewhere. The other point that makes me think that this is indeed a Gwich'in garment is that from what I have seen from early Slavey clothing, the pattern is different. It appears that the Slavey tunics generally have straight and not pointed bottoms. Having said that, I must point out that there are very few examples of very early Slavey

clothing to compare with Gwich'in clothing. Other than the breastband pattern details the two tunics # 62C and # 63 are essentially the same and because of this, I am satisfied that Tunic # 62C is correctly identified as Kutchin.

A 

B 

C 

D 

Figure # 62. Four Gwich'in/Kutchin tunics. A) CMC VI-I-73a, B) ROM 2000.80.1.1, C) NMNH 2030, D) PRM 1884.88.8.

Figure # 63. Gwich'in summer outfit. RSM A.564

The provenance for Gwich'in tunics is generally good as they were collected by people involved in some manner with the Hudson Bay Company during their trading operations in northern Canada and into the interior of Alaska. Yet some tunics are mistakenly identified as Kutchin because they have the same outline. This tunic pattern is common from Northern British Columbia up into the interior of Alaska and across to the north western part of the Northwest Territories. Identifying a tunic solely based on its outline could lead to errors. See figure # 62D for an example of a tunic that is identified as Kutchin based on the style. This tunic, which I discussed in the Introduction of this thesis, was donated to the Pitt River Museum in Oxford in 1884 and the location or date of collection is unknown. While it does have a wave-like pattern in the breastband, it is not colorful like the Gwich'in and there are not the three strips traveling down from an embroidered area in front of the collar. There are three red painted stripes which is a characteristic of other Athapaskan tunics but not Gwich'in. Because of these differences the tunic looks more like the southern Yukon style rather than northern Yukon.

Next I will show Gwich'in breastbands that have incorporated trade items, mainly beads and/or dentalia shells. The dentalia shells originate in the Haida territory of the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia and illustrate how far the trade networks stretched. The dentalia shells made their way inland from the Tlingits to interior Athapaskans and on to the Gwich'in. The beads first arrived in the Gwich'in territory with the Hudson Bay Company but some Russian trade beads may have worked their way up from the Tlingits in the earlier part of the 19th century, before the Hudson Bay Company established itself in the area in the mid-19th century. Robert Campbell mentioned that there were already beads in Northern Tutchone territory when he first established Fort Selkirk at the fork of the Pelly and Yukon River in 1848. An early description of Southern Yukon First Nations clothing is found in *Prelude to Bonanza,* in the Pelly and Yukon River areas between 1848 and 1853 as described by Robert Campbell, when he moved into the area and operated Fort Selkirk:

> Two of their leading Chiefs, father & son, named Thlin-ikik-Thling and Hanan were tall, stalwart, good looking men, clad from head to foot in dressed deer skins, ornamented with beads & porcupine quills of all colours. (Wright 1976: 40)

And again Campbell describes the clothing down the Yukon River somewhere between the Pelly, Stewart and White Rivers:

> Their dress which when new is pretty & picturesque, is made of the skin of the moose or the reindeer, principally the latter. The skirt or coat is finished in a point, both before & behind, & reaches down to the knees, being frequently ornamented with coloured beads, porcupine quills, or long hair. The coat has a hole large enough to admit the head, but does not open in front, & is provided with a hood which can be used when wanted, as a headdress. The trowsers [*sic*] or leg covering, & shoes are made of the same material, & trimmed the same way. The winter costume is the same, except that the skin is dressed with the hair left on, & the garment made with hair inside for warmth. Their socks in winter consist of grass & hair, over which is drawn the shoe. Their tents of course are made of leather. These Indians are very fond of ornaments of any kind; such as ear-rings, & also decorate their dress freely with ermine or squirrel skins or tails, duck wings, long hair, &c. They also often daub their faces with red earth or ochre &c... (Wright 1976: 67)

As we can read from these descriptions, trade beads have already made their way into the Northern Tutchone territory before Campbell showed up in the region. It seems to be the only trade item that was in common use at that time. See figure # 64 A-D for the Gwich'in tunics with dentalia shells and beads incorporated into the designs.

A 

B 

C 

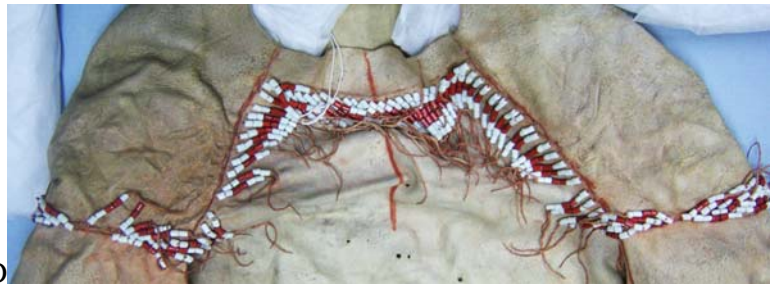
D 

Figure # 64. Four Gwich'in tunics with trade beads incorporated into the breastband designs. A) NMNH 881 B) NMNH 4971 C) NMNH 884 D) NMNH 1855.

The first two above are men's tunics and the two bottom garments are women's dresses. The most obvious difference between a man's tunic and a woman's dress, as I mentioned before, is that a man's tunic has a pointed front and back while the woman's dress is generally cut level at the bottom. The second difference is that most of the time the woman's dress breastband area is not decorated nearly as much as a man's tunic. In the Dawson City (Han) area, when people asked why men's clothing was fancier than women's clothing, they replied that it was that way with birds. The male bird is generally more decorated than the female bird. This is even apparent in the grouse dance performed in the southern Yukon. It is the man who dances like grouse, using grouse tail feather dance fans to try and attract the women. See figure # 65 for full length view of a man's tunic and woman's dress.

The four Gwich'in breastbands in figure # 64 are good examples of the transition from porcupine embroidery to using beads. In figure A the breastband is mostly dentalia shells and the pattern is connected with blue trade beads. The fringes are also highlighted

with beads. While the pattern is much simpler than the earlier porcupine embroidery it is still quite attractive with the generous use of dentalia shells, which also shows the wealth of the owner. Notice that the beads are used in the geometric patterns, not the later floral designs. The breastband is wide and the collar area is well defined with beads and dentalia shells. In tunic B there is more use of beads and the breastband is wider than A. It is also very attractive. Both these tunics as well as the two dresses are in the National Museum of Natural History Smithsonian collection in Washington, DC. When we look at the woman's dresses we can see right away that the breastband work is simpler and goes across the arm, up the side of the shoulder to the collar and across. The breastband does not travel across the chest. In C the dress has a narrow breastband that has a series of beaded fringes coming out of the bottom of the breastband. Dress D is the same but without the breastband, having only beaded fringes.

Figure # 65. Two Gwich'in garments. A) Left; Man's tunic, NMNH 881 B) Right; Woman's dress, NMNH 884.

In figure # 65 you can see how the bottom of the garment is handled: the male tunic pointed and the female dress straight across. There are some cases where a garment is identified as a woman's dress but is pointed in the front and back. I have not been able to verify that these are in fact male tunics that have been misidentified, so for now I accept them as woman's dresses with a pointed front and back. The other identifiers are the painted lines and fringes at the bottom of the two garments. In both the dresses (# 64C&D) is a double painted line across the bottom. This does not occur in all dresses but appears to be common on those dresses that use an additional hide at the bottom to increase the length of the dress. This may be due to the use of smaller caribou hides. The seam line is then painted in red ochre. The Dena'ina use one piece of hide for the length and I have not seen these lines on their dresses. The line coming down the center is common in both male and female garments. Both the garments have decorated cuffs.

Han & Northern Tutchone

Just to the south of the Gwich'in are the Han people and the Northern Tutchone. Clothing of the Han and possibly the northern most people of the Northern Tutchone is very close in appearance to the Gwich'in. See figure # 78 on page 108 of Han dresses for an example of closeness in styles when compared to the Gwich'in dress in figure # 65B. Below in figure # 66 is three examples of Han or possibly Northern Tutchone breastband designs.

All three are in the National Museum of National History Smithsonian in Washington, DC. Item 66A is listed as Han and item 66B was collected in the Peel River. This river falls within both the Gwich'in and Northern Tutchone traditional Territory. Since item 66B does not have either beaded or porcupine embroidery going from the breastband to the collar, as in all the Gwich'in tunics, and since the use of painting lines from the breastband to the collar was more popular in the south-central Yukon, I put forward that this tunic may be of Northern Tutchone manufacture. Item 66C was collected at Fort Reliance, Yukon and is well within Han territory. This is a child's garment and has the hood attached. In the adult garment's case, the hood was almost always separate. Maybe for a child's garment the hood was attached for ease of use by the child and to prevent loss of the hood. All three of the breastband designs are mostly beaded and in the case of item 66A also decorated with dentalia shells. All three look very similar to the Gwich'in breastband designs that used beads. I am suspecting that when the beads and dentalia shells were used for the breastbands they limited the amount of geometric designs that were earlier created with porcupine quills. Being neighbors and the overlapping of traditional territories may have a lot to do with the similarities of breastband design, especially after the introduction of beads.

A 

B 

C 

Figure # 66, Han & possible Northern Tutchone breastband designs; A) Han tunic 1857-0 NMNH. B) Tunic from Peel River 1856-1 NMNH. C) Han child's clothing from Fort Reliance, Yukon 49150 NMNH.

Southern Yukon Style

The people to the south of the Northern Tutchone are the Southern Tutchone, and south of them the Tagish, Inland Tlingit and Tahltan peoples. Because the styles of this area seem to be different from other regions I will deal with the southern Yukon and Northern British Columbia as one area, which I will call the Southern Yukon Style. This is regardless of the fact that within this area there are different ways to deal with the breastband designs. Every article and related information of southern Yukon hide clothing in collections I have examined and read was collected from the Tlingits along the Alaska coast. They had obtained the clothing from the interior peoples through trade and were prized by the Tlingits. Most information on these tunics states that they were collected in Sitka and do not identify in which area they were originally made. Other tunics were collected from Klukwan in Chilkat Tlingit territory and these tunics most certainly were obtained from either the Southern or Northern Tutchone based on the trade routes the Chilkat Tlingits used. The tunics below have enough evidence to suggest to me that they originate from the Southern Style region. One of the interesting things about some of the breastband designs from this region is the use of a "V", which is at times a deep pointed style breastband design. The other point is that for some tunics they used larger blocks of coloured areas in the breastband patterns. There also seems to be red ochre painted on the chest areas. The added red ochre is not painted in any design or pattern. Was it originally painted over the whole chest area but has worn off over time to leave only sections with paint? See figure # 67 for three examples of tunics from the Tutchone part of the region.

A 

B 

C 

Figure # 67, Southern Style breastband designs; A) Southern Style tunic. 79349 Field Museum. B) Southern Style tunic 1168 Burke Museum. C) Southern Style tunic 2430 Burke Museum.

Note that the breastband pattern designs shown above tend to use bigger shapes and bolder motifs than the Tanaina or Gwich'in and more colourful than the Tanaina.

Tunic 67A is from the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago and was collected in 1902 by George Emmons. This tunic's breastband is pointed at the center of the chest and has

the Greek style key or meander pattern making up the colourful beaded design. This meander pattern seems to be unique to the southern style's area. The museum data card for this tunic states:

> "Collected by Emmons in 1902 from a Tlingit chief in Sitka, Alaska. The chief had acquired them in 1900 from Tlingit at the head of the Lynn Canal, who in turn had received them in trade from an interior Athapaskan group (VanStone 1982: 51)" from Pride of the Indian Wardrobe by Judy Thompson.

The head of the Lynn Canal suggests that this garment was collected from the Chilkat Tlingits who in turn traded with the Southern and Northern Tutchone. Here is what Emmons wrote concerning the Coastal Tlingit use of the hide clothing with the breastband designs:

> The tanned skin dress was ornamented with fringe strips and bands painted red. Beadwork was not employed on the dress, and porcupine quill work was only on clothing procured in trade from the interior tribes. (Emmons, 239)

The next tunic, # 67B, was also collected by Emmons in 1909 from Klukwan, a Chilkat Tlingit village. It is listed as originating from the Yukon Basin suggesting the Northern and Southern Tutchone traditional territory. It has a slight point at the chest and is a simple checkered pattern of orange dyed quills. This basic pattern appears on other items from the southern Yukon such as bone gopher skinning knives and bone arm bands. The next tunic (# 67C) was also collected by Emmons in 1909 from the Chilkat Tlingits and is listed as coming from the Yukon River valley. Again, this would make it either Southern or Northern Tutchone.

In the next two examples are garments that may come from the Inland Tlingit people. When the Tlingit moved inland for trade reasons they had to adopt the Athapaskan lifestyle and had to deal with the harsh environment in order to survive. This included adopting the clothing styles of the interior people. Figure # 68 has two rather different style garments. Item 68A is a fairly typical garment from the Southern Style region and has a unique geometric breastband pattern and item 68B has a deep "V" in the breastband. This is not uncommon for the Southern Style region. Item 68A has a unique repeating 'dumbbell' geometric design in the breastband that is typical in using bigger bolder patterns in the breastband. The breastband pattern is made of repeating dumbbells and has a square motif, third from center space in the breastband, providing a break between the repeating dumbbells. I find that the space size for the dumbbells and the dividing of the dumbbells themselves remind me of what is known as the 'Divine Proportion'. According to Priya Hemenwat's *The Secret Code,* on page 25, this size of rectangle shape is most pleasing. The approximate ratio of 1.618 is known as the 'golden ratio' or the 'Divine Proportion' and is often found in nature. With a greater examination of breastband and other geometric designs we may find many examples of the 'Divine Proportion'. This would not have been planned on purpose but was created for its pleasing feeling. Silverberry seeds are used in the fringes as well as porcupine quill wrapping. Beads are used in the collar area and on the strips leading down to the breastband. Red ochre paint was used on the seams.

A 

B 

Figure # 68, Southern Style breastband designs; A) Southern Style tunic. 5085 Museum für Völkerkunde, Vienna. B) Southern Style dress VI-J-82, CMC.

The second garment is in the Canadian Museum of Civilization and is identified as a woman's dress but has the pointed bottom front and back edges. I have also seen photographs of this breastband pattern on many other tunics and dance shirts that were worn by men. This pattern is also often used on coastal Tlingit dance shirts adding weight to the idea that this is a common coastal and Inland Tlingit pattern. Because the dress has a pointed front and back I wonder if this is indeed a women's dress. Note the photograph in figure # 142 on page 164 of a man wearing a tunic with the same breastband pattern. This dress was collected by H.H. Cheney and was received at the CMC in December of 1931. When and where this dress was made, and by whom, is not listed. The CMC has listed this dress as probably Inland Tlingit. The catalogue card states:

> "Inland Tlingit" attribution based on comparison with documented specimens from Teslin Lake which have very similar "stylized leaf" motif as found on the cuffs of this specimen.

See figure # 69 for the detail of cuff's bead designs. This bead style does look Inland Tlingit so I agree with this attribution. The breastband is of a meander design that is sometimes used in the Southern Style area and goes along with the trend of using big bold patterns. The breastband is beaded and the fringes appear to be wrapped in porcupine quills.

Figure # 69. Detail of cuff design, Southern Style dress VI-J-82, CMC.

There is a similar looking garment very close to the tunic in # 68B and is listed as a Northern Athapaskan shirt. It is in the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta. The museum purchased this dress in 1965. See figure # 70. Note that the design and the pointed breastband are almost identical to the above dress, but for some differences. The breastband has quill work instead of beads. In fact there are no beads used in this garment at all. There is a collar added to the head hole and there are fringes coming out of the front and back of the pointed bottom. Furthermore, the sleeve cuffs are lined with fur which is normally a Dena'ina trait. What I found amazing is the incredible amount of work required to create this quill work breastband. The geometric pattern in this dress is very close to the Inland Tlingit dress above in figure # 68B. The breastband design is the same on both garments and would indicate that the dress in figure # 70 is also from the Southern Style region. The breastband designs are elaborate and remind me of the geometric designs on the spruce root baskets from Teslin. Emmons documented Athapaskan origins to Tlingit basket motifs which originated with Athapaskan quill work designs.

Figure # 70, Northern Athapaskan southern style garment. AC 1, #92210, Glenbow Museum.

Adjacent to the Inland Tlingit territory are the Tahltan people. They were displaced from the southern Yukon about 200 years ago by the Inland Tlingit for trade reasons. There was a lot of fighting between the two groups as well as trade and intermarriage. This may have resulted in the similar appearances of the following two breastband designs with the Inland Tlingit breastband design in # 68B. The garment in # 71A was collected on the Stikine River which would place it in Tahltan as well as Tlingit territory. The upper Stikine River is Tahltan while the lower Stikine River is Tlingit. It is in the Ethnologishes Museum Staatliche Museen in Berlin, Germany and is listed as Tlingit. The museum has many obviously Athapaskan garments listed as Tlingit. I think this error can be attributed to the original collectors directly assigning the artifacts as Tlingit origin. This is a case where the museum identifications need to be corrected.

The breastband pattern on this garment is a series of repeating chevrons. While not as colourful as other Southern Style tunics the bold geometric chevrons do fit in the Southern Style area. The fringes are wrapped in porcupine quills as well as beads. There are beads along the collar that lead down to the breastband. Garment 71B is in the Glenbow Museum and is listed as Tahltan. It was purchased in 1966 by the museum. This garment appears to lack the colour and bolder breastband design that the other garments from the Southern Style area have. The breastband design is simpler than both the Tanaina and the Gwich'in but I think fits more in the Southern Style. There is porcupine embroidery in the breastband along with silverberries on the fringes. There appears to be a series of red beads that go along the collar and down to the breastband. Based on the overall style and that it was collected on the Stikine River leads me to think this tunic is Tahltan in origin and traded to the Tlingits down the Stikine River. It was then later traded by the Tlingits to white traders who listed the garment as Tlingit.

 A

 B

Figure # 71, Southern Yukon Style garments. A) Tunic from Stikine River. IV A 527, Ethnologisches Museum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. B) Tahltan tunic AC 16a #75989, Glenbow Museum.

The Stikine River tunic has something different on the back. While very often the backs are bare or have the breastband continuing all the way around the tunic, the Stikine River has two rows of fringes. See figure # 72 for a back view of the tunic.

Figure # 72. Back Tunic from Stikine River IV A 527 Ethnologishes Museum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

While not so common, these multi fringe or decorated bands were sometimes added to tunics and dance aprons. In the next section I will present a couple of other examples of garments that have extra fringes and breastbands.

Fancy tunics

I have on occasion come across tunics that had additional breastbands or decorated bands attached to them. These range in number from two to six bands. I have not seen anything written about the reasons for having additional bands. I have decided to call these Fancy Tunics, since I am guessing that these additional breastbands were intended to make them fancier, possibly for potlatches and other ceremonies. In addition to the tunics I have seen hide dance aprons designed the same way. The hide dance aprons had a number of bands on them and I suspect that these were used only during potlatches and celebrations. This would strengthen the idea of additional bands being added for ceremonial purposes. In the National Museum of Finland there is a Dena'ina dress that has two breastbands across the front. See figure # 73.

Figure # 73. Dena'ina woman's dress with two breastbands. VK 174, NMF.

In addition to the dress above there is an almost identical dress in the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin. The difference is that it appears that the extra band is placed on the back of the dress. I base this on the shape of the collar opening: one side of the dress the opening of the collar is lower and this side has one band as seen in the right photograph below in figure # 74. The collar on the other side of the dress is higher and has two bands as seen in the left photograph below. I am assuming that the lower collar is also the front of the dress. On the side with two bands, the bottom band is wider that the top band and note that the collar is round with fur trimming while the collar on the Helsinki dress above is square without fur trimming.

Figure # 74. Dena'ina woman's dress with two breastbands. IV A9386. Ethnologishes Museum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

The museum notes indicate that this dress arrived in the Ethnologisches Museum via Russia.

The next step in adding breastbands is in the British Museum collection in London. The tunic has six embroidered bands across the front.

Figure # 75. Yukon made fancy tunic. AM1982.28.21, BM.

The museum notes for the tunic above state that it was purchased in 1982 from the Warwickshire Museum and that it was originally collected from the Yukon. It does not state where in the Yukon. Judy Thompson in *Fascinating Challenges* suggests that it may have been collected during Capt. Vancouver's Pacific voyage in 1794. This tunic is dark smoked, so this would seem to indicate the garment is not Dena'ina since I have not come across any darkly smoked Dena'ina garments. In fact the Dena'ina clothing are all almost white in colour. The geometric patterns on the six bands are too muted to be Gwich'in. While some of the colours are commonly used by the Dena'ina some of the breastband patterns do not look like Dena'ina designs. The top band uses a series of blocked geometric shapes that are white and olive colour. The next three bands have a series of repeating step-pyramids in white, olive and the occasional sepia colour. The fifth band has a checked pattern all across the band in black, white and sepia. The final band has a series if diagonal step patterns in white, sepia and brown. The olive colour is unusual. The cut appears to be in the Gwich'in style. It is my estimation that this fancy tunic was made somewhere between the Gwich'in and Dena'ina areas. It may be a Han, Tanana or Ahtena fancy tunic and may have been traded through a Tlingit middle-man to end up in the hands of the original collector.

There is another fancy tunic in the Peter the Great Museum and it was collected by the Russians. The breastbands appear to be of southern Yukon style. The use of multi-embroidered bands also extended to dance aprons. I came across a number of dance aprons but failed to take photographs of them all. Below in figure # 76 is a photograph I took of one on display at the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka. Unfortunately the photo is of poor quality.

Figure # 76. Athapaskan made Fancy dance apron. IV.X.12, SJM.

The museum notes for this dance apron state that it was manufactured by Athapaskans and obtained and owned by the Chilkat Tlingits of Klukwan, Alaska. This would make this dance apron either Southern or Northern Tutchone in manufacture.

The last Athapaskan tunics/dresses in use

Next two photographs are of what may be one of the last tunics or dresses used, even if the tunic was only worn for special occasions. These are the only photographs I have ever seen of the men's pointed tunic and the Han women's hide dresses. The first photograph in figure # 77 was taken in the Tanana River area and the second photograph in figure # 78 was taken in Dawson City. By the 1880s nobody was using these tunics anymore and yet the photograph in figure # 77 was taken between 1896 and 1939 while the photograph in figure # 78 was taken after the city of Dawson City was built in 1897! The caption for figure # 77 states: Photograph of Chief Alexander at Tolovana in "old time costume." The Tanana River is in the background.

Figure # 77. Tanana Chief Alexander wearing pointed tunic. UAF-1985-72-91

The tunic appears to be darkly smoked. Perhaps there is a connection with the darkly smoked fancy tunic in figure # 75 on page 105. The breastband pattern is a simple dark and light repeating motif done with dentalia shells. There are no beaded, embroidered or painted lines going from the breastband to the collar. He is wearing a sash as a belt. There are also dentalia shells lining the sleeve cuffs. He is wearing a dentalia shell necklace and with all this display of dentalia shells he is showing us that he is a man of wealth and status!

The image of the hide dresses worn by the Han women in figure # 78 is from a postcard from my collection. The postcard caption states: "Indian Women, returning from Trapping.-Dawson, Y.T." and on the back is written: "Pub. By Cribbs Drug Store". Cribbs Drug Store was in operation in Dawson City from 1897 until 1920. Since hide clothing fell into disuse shortly after the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898 I would think that this photograph was taken closer to 1897.

Figure # 78. Postcard of Han Women returning to Dawson City sometime between 1897 and 1920. UvK Collection.

The women are wearing typical hide dresses that look very much like the Gwich'in hide dress in figure # 65B on page 94. In examining the details I can see the dresses in the postcard are slightly different from the dress in figure # 65B. The dress on the woman on the right in the postcard has what appears to be a dark band around the bottom. It appears to be part of the dress. The patterns at the bottom of both dresses are very close to the pattern in figure # 65B. While these dresses look like the Gwich'in dresses, I believe these to be Han dresses, as they were very similar in appearance. I base my belief on the fact that the caption states these women are returning from trapping which would imply that they are Han women returning home to the Dawson City area. Note the mitts and the string that is attached to them. The string goes around the neck. Also note the snowshoes behind the women which are typical Yukon style snowshoes.

Gopher coats & rabbit skin clothing

Since I am examining upper body wear I will be adding two other styles of coats that are often overlooked. They are the gopher skin coats and rabbit clothing. In Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death I will be discussing gopher skin robes further. The robes were at one time quite common and since gopher skins were used to make robes it only makes sense that they would also have been used for other clothing. In figure # 79 is an example of a gopher skin jacket. It is in the collection of the National Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC. The museum purchased the coat in 1938 and it is listed as coming from the Yukon and from the Nahane Tribe. Based on the area where the Yukon Nahane lived according to the older Yukon tribe maps, this would most likely make the coat a Kaska garment. The gopher skins are sewn together in the same manner as the robes but shaped into a coat.

Figure # 79. Probably Kaska made gopher skin coat. 198044.000, NMAI.

These gopher skin coats were made throughout the region. Later in figure # 406 on page 377 I will refer to another gopher skin coat but that one was made in Klukwan, Alaska where there are no gophers!

The next article of clothing is rabbit skin made clothing. In the Yukon there are no rabbits but hares, yet these are universally called rabbits. In *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* it states:

> Rabbit Skins were peeled off the bodies in long strips, washed and woven loosely into light, warm blankets and parkas. The weaving was done without a loom and was loose enough to provide air space next to the body just like modern new undergarments for cold weather wear. (McClellan 1987: 130)

And in McClellan's *My Old People Say:*

> Robes and parkeys of netted rabbit skin were widely used in aboriginal times because they were light, warm, and easily made. Rabbit skins were also popular for wrapping babies in and making hats. Many people still prefer foot duffles of rabbit skin in their winter moccasins. (McClellan 2001: 157)

In this next image you can see by the texture that the garment was woven. The undated but quite old postcard below was produced between 1920 and 1955 by the Missionnaires Oblats de Marie-Immaculée (OMI) of the Catholic Church in Paris in order to show off the members of their 'flock' to their supporters in France.

Figure # 80. Post card of Young Indian girl in full rabbit skin clothing. OMI.

The caption reads: Missions D'Extreme-Nord Canadien. Series VII-Petite fille habillée en "peau de lièvre". This translates to: Little girl dressed in a "hare skin". While the postcard does not give an exact location, the rabbit clothing was common to Athapaskans in many areas of the north and this image is representational of what the clothing looked like when worn. These garments were still worn into the early twentieth century. There are a couple of complete sets of almost identical children's Gwich'in rabbit skin clothing in the National Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian (cat. Number 071053.00, 071504.000). Those sets were collected in the Peel and Porcupine Rivers areas in 1917 by Donald Cadzow.

Rabbit skins fell into disuse shortly after World War Two. Below in figure # 81 is one of the last images of a used rabbit skin coat I have come across from the Yukon. The photograph is of Florence Orr (nee Kushniruk) and was taken in the late 1940s during the Winter Carnival in Whitehorse. Florence is about four years old when the photograph was taken so this would place the time about 1947 or 1948. Florence is also my 1st cousin once removed. There was little information about the rabbit skin coat but it seems to have a dark trim. This may be the fur of the rabbit in the summer when it is darker or it may be another animal. It does not appear like the coat was woven but that the skins were sown together. The texture looks quite different from the above image of rabbit skin clothing in figure # 80. The sides of Florence's mukluks are rabbit trimmed. The beadwork applied to the front of the mukluks is the simplified flowers that became common after the completion of the Alaska Highway in 1942.

Figure # 81. Florence Orr wearing a rabbit skin coat late 1940s in Whitehorse's Winter Carnival. Photograph Courtesy of Florence Orr.

Changing styles

From the 1880s onwards and throughout the Yukon, First Nations people had begun to wear more western style trade clothing. This was before any real influx of white people. As I quoted earlier on page 3 of this thesis: 'Dr. George Wilson, a member of the 1883 Lt. Schwatka expedition into the Yukon, stated that well within Han territory, whitemans clothing was "universally worn." (Duncan 1989: 133)

After the introduction of trade clothing, hide clothing was still made, but no longer in the original style. The makers of hide clothing were influenced by trade clothing that was making its way into the territory. This western clothing style was adopted quickly. The pointed bottoms as well as the breastbands disappeared. Beads became the medium of decoration. While there were still hide pullover jackets, more jackets now had the fronts opened and were closed with buttons or tie-strings. Fringes were sometimes used and beads were most often placed on cloth and then added to the jacket at the shoulders, the bib, or both. In *Northern Athapaskan Art* Kate Duncan describes the hide jackets that have beaded bibs and shoulder epaulets as "English" style hunting jackets. They were first seen at Fort Yukon by W.H. Dall in 1867 indicating that these were the first major style change from the pull-over tunics. It would appear that the hide tunics continued to be made for only another 20 years. Another hide shirt was made sometime after the introduction of the English hunting jackets. It was beaded without the beaded shoulder epaulets and bib. Duncan identifies them as dance shirts. If the garment is open in the front, she calls them jackets. If the garment is a pull-over and has a longer body, she identifies these as tunics.

Pull-over jackets and shirts

See figure # 82 for two examples of the pull-over style jacket with various decorative styles.

A 

B 

Figure # 82, Pull-over jackets. A) Top; Hide English style hunting jacket from "Upper Yukon" 129350 NMNH B) Bottom; Tagish Hide Jacket VI-P-19 CMC.

While I totally agree with the first jacket (#82A) being the English style hunting jacket, I am reluctant to call the next one a dance shirt. # 82B is a hide jacket from the Tagish people and was collected by Frederick Lambert between 1910 and 1930. Some of the noticeable differences to the hunting jacket are the downturned collar, a different style neck opening, and chest pockets. As well, there are decorated cuffs and a set of fringes that come out at the sides of the jacket and along the bottom of the sleeves. I am more inclined to think of this as a fancy jacket to be worn on special occasions and not exclusively intended as a hunting or dancing shirt.

In the southern Yukon there are many examples of these pull-over style jackets. The following are three photographs of Chief Jim Boss wearing shirts, both square bottom and pointed bottom edges. Chief Jim Boss was the chief of the Lake Lebarge Southern Tutchone people just to the north of Whitehorse. Marge Jackson stated that Sophie Miller's mother made this shirt. See figure # 83 and # 84. In the left Figure # 84 Chief Boss is wearing a hide

shirt with fringes coming off the apron and the bottom of the sleeves. There is an embroidered design on the apron that is a mix of geometric zigzag and scroll or floral designs. The sleeves have a military style officer's cuff design. While there are differences in details, overall this shirt is close in pattern to the Tagish made shirt in figure # 82B. This is an E.J. Hamacher photograph who was a portrait photographer in Whitehorse in the early 20th century. The photograph is not dated. Chief Jim Boss was born sometime in 1871 or 1872 and took over as chief from his father Chief Mundessa around the time of the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898. His mother was from the Carcross area and she may have been Skookum Jim's sister. This would make Jim Boss Tagish. On Mundessa's grave stone is a painted bird, presumably a Crow, see figure # 401 on page 371. If Mundessa was from the Crow clan, his son Jim Boss would be a member of the Wolf clan.

Figure # 83, Chief Jim Boss. E.J. Hamacher fonds, 2002/118 #697, YA.

In the left photograph in figure # 84 we can see Chief Boss is older and appears to be wearing the same hide shirt as in the earlier photograph. He has a bag around his neck which looks like a knife sheath and wears what appears to be a captain's hat that has been modified. The hat has the commonly applied diamond and triangle designs going around it which are essentially crossing zigzag patterns. The design, a geometric zigzag pattern, also appears on other First Nations clothing and hats. Here the shirt has been modified with a fringed overlay sewn on the front of the shirt. This gives the appearance of a pointed front bottom edge. This pointed yoke and the pull-over style is reminiscent of earlier Athapaskan tunics with the pointed front and backs along the bottom edges. Chief Boss is also holding what appears to be a pair of beaded gantlets and is wearing a pair of tall undecorated hide boots.

Figure # 84 Jim Boss; Left. 91.303, MacBride Museum photograph. Right: Rolf Hougen Photograph.

In Figure # 84 on the right we see a still older Chief Boss wearing an elaborately ornamented jacket. It is embroidered in the front and decorated with a combination of fringes and feathers attached to the shirt. The shirt also has the pointed bottom edge. The hat Chief Boss is wearing appears to be the same in both photographs but in the right photograph feathers have been added around the top. Chief Boss is also wearing a pair of tall decorated hide boots. The caption for this photograph states: "Chief Jim Boss of Lebarge-Crow Tribe-Full War Dress-He died in 1950". The 'Full War Dress' of the caption seems romanticized. The photograph is giving the impression that the Crow tribe were made up of war-like people, which is not correct. Another point is that the caption states that Chief Jim Boss is from the Crow Tribe. This is an example of describing the Southern Tutchone and Tagish people as the Crow Tribe. Since Jim Boss's father was Southern Tutchone and Crow Clan, Jim Boss would have been Wolf Clan of the Tagish people because of his mother.

The next hide shirt in figure # 85 has squared bottom edges and is made in the pull-over style. It is of Patsy Henderson in an early postcard. There were a number of postcards produced of Patsy Henderson because he was present at the discovery of the Klondike gold on August 17th, 1896. Later in life he would tell the tales of the discovery and perform for tourists in the village of Carcross. In the postcard Henderson is holding two coastal style rattles and has some sort of necklace around his neck. An interesting point is that he is wearing a bishop-style hat. As stated before, the hats were highly individual and there were many different designs. This appears to be one of those unique designs, but one wonders, could it be an actual bishop's hat!

Figure # 85. Postcard of Patsy Henderson, undated. UvK Collection.

In an earlier shown photograph in figure # 28 on page 62 is Patsy Henderson performing in Carcross in front of the Caribou Hotel. He is wearing the same patterned but different beaded hide shirt shown here in figure # 85. In figure # 28 the fringes along the bottom are longer and there are fringes across the chest. There also appears to be more beadwork on the shirt. In the photographs I have seen of Pasty Henderson he is often wearing this type of hide pull-over shirt with a collar and fringes along the bottom. Henderson performed for tourists in Carcross and was therefore one of the most photographed Yukon First Nations people. There have been many postcards of Henderson in different types of dress.

A last pull-over type jacket I will show is of Leo Taku Jack in figure # 86. Jack is an Inland Tlingit from Atlin. In the undated photograph he is wearing a simple pull-over hide shirt that has fringes along the shoulders and along the bottom. The shirt appears to be un-beaded. He is wearing a type of headband and is playing the drum. As you can see in this and the previous photographs the pull-over shirt or jacket was popular, at least in the southern Yukon and Northern British Columbia.

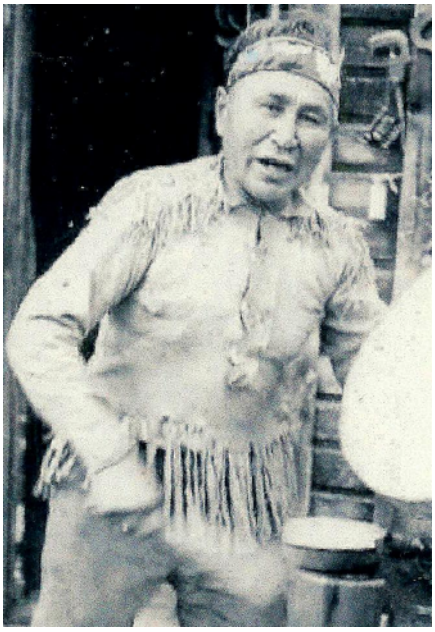


Figure # 86, Leo Taku Jack. Undated Photograph. Courtesy of Atlin Historical Society.

Chief's coats & jackets

The next jackets I will examine are those with the front open and buttons or hide string ties to close the fronts. In the Dawson City Museum, on display, is one of Han Chief Isaac's coats. The display information notes that this style coat was based on the "Chief's Coat" that the Hudson Bay post at Fort Yukon used to give out. They were based on a military style coat with an open front and special decorations. There was little detail on this coat. In # 87 is a photograph of a "Chief's Coat" on display in the Dawson City Museum. One of the common traits of these coats is the presence of a decoration going down the front of the garments. Often the decoration is in the form of floral bead designs. Often, added attention is given to the cuffs. In Chief Isaac's coat below you will note the two lines of bead work going down the front of the coat. The beading style is what I identify as the upper Yukon River Style. In Chapter Four-Beaded & Floral Designs I will explain the various beading styles. The cuffs are also beaded.


Figure # 87. Chief Isaac's Coat. DCM.

The next photograph in figure # 88 is of Chief Isaac wearing another "Chief's Coat". It was taken between 1920 and 1932 and is part of the Charlie Isaac Collection at the Dawson City Museum.

Figure # 88 Chief Isaac's coat. 984.70.1 DCM & HS.

Chief Isaac's jacket has fur trim around the base and pockets. He is also carrying two bags and the straps are clearly visible. You can make out the tie straps used to close the jacket's front. There are also two beaded bands running down the front of this coat. The cuffs have an added fur trim. The front pocket covers are beaded with what appears to be a large flower. Additionally there are fringes at the epaulette and shoulder areas. Chief Isaac is wearing beaded leg bands. Because Yukon First Nations people are highly adaptive we can appreciate the bowler hat which rounds off the overall appearance.

In the following photograph, figure # 89, is a picture from the Albert Drean fonds from Yukon Archives. It is a picture of an Inland Tlingit Yukon First Nations man that I understand to be named Jim Fox. He is wearing a hide jacket that is open at the front. The cut is basically the same design as Chief Isaac's coat in figure # 87 with the two bands of beaded floral designs running down the front. This indicates that this style of jacket was common for at least the Han in the central Yukon through to the Inland Tlingit in the southern Yukon and northern British Columbia. The cuffs are beaded as well as the flaps for the pockets and collar. There are no epaulettes but there are fringes where the sleeve is joined to the body of the coat. Note the unique hat he is wearing with the feather plume at the front, which very well may be a duster. I discuss the use of feather dusters in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death. I cannot make out what type of leg bands, if they are indeed leg bands that Jim Fox is wearing.

Figure # 89. Albert Drean fonds, 89/5, YA.

The next hide jacket was collected from Fort Selkirk, thus Northern Tutchone, is made of moose skin and cross fox fur trimming. It is in the National Museum of Natural History Smithsonian Collection in Washington, DC. This photograph illustrates the tie strings quite well. The jacket has fringes along the shoulder and under the sleeve. The fur lines the cuffs and an upturned collar. There is a series of embroidered designs along the front. Embroidery was less common than beads to decorate the garment. See figure # 90.

Figure # 90. Northern Tutchone moose hide jacket. 379786 NMNH.

The final jacket I will discuss is one of the items that Johnny Joe donated to the MacBride Museum and is shown in figure # 91. Johnny Joe was a Southern Tutchone man. This jacket has elaborate bead designs that consist of floral work and what seems to depict animals or other beings. The Elders I showed the image on the pocket to felt that it was an early flower design. Johnny Joe's grandmother, who was from Hutchi, made many of the items that Johnny Joe donated.

Figure # 91, Johnny Joe's coat. 1977.46.1, MacBride Museum.

Note the zigzag or "S" style stem work coming down the length of the front panel. The overall floral design is also in the upper Yukon River style. There are a number of split coloured leaf motifs throughout the beadwork and there are no negative spaces left in the centers of these leaf motifs. The leaf designs are common for the Tagish and Southern Tutchone. This jacket employs a single beaded band running down the front of it and has button holes to close the coat. Most of the other coats use ties for this. The cuffs, bottom hem and whole upper body of the coat have floral bead designs on a red cloth.

Button coats

Another less common shirt style I will call the button coat. This button coat is decorated the same way as a button blanket with buttons lining the edges of the coat. See figure # 89 for a photograph of Chief Isaac wearing this style of coat. This photograph was taken in 1931 at Minto Park in Dawson City. Chief Isaac's coat appears to be made in the same pattern as the coat he is wearing in figure # 88. This coat has the standard button blanket style trim along the outside edge instead of a floral decorated trim which can be seen in figure # 88. It has the buttons sewn along the trim's edge. It is sewn the same way as along the edge of a button blanket, although this jacket's edges are trimmed with fur and not fabric.

Chief Isaac is also carrying a bag with the beaded strap over his shoulder and is holding a doll and a walking stick. The doll is not a child's plaything, but, as many other dolls, an article of importance. Dolls will be examined closer in Chapter Six-Art of Rituals & Shamans. And once again Chief Isaac has adopted a non-traditional style of headdress, a top hat which adds to his overall Han appearance.

Figure # 92, Chief Isaac wearing a button-shirt. 984.32.1.16, DCM&HS.

I have seen other examples of similar button coats. Another photograph is in the *Handbook of North American Indians* on page 535 of Volume 6. The photograph shows Nabesna John, an Upper Tanana man, wearing the same style shirt as Chief Isaac. John's shirt has two rows of buttons sewn in by the fur trim, while Chief Isaac's only has one row. It also appears that John's shirt has a fur collar while Isaac's does not. Chief Isaac had friends and relatives in the Upper Tanana area. In fact, in response to the prohibition by the Canadian Government on Potlatches, Chief Isaac took songs, dances, drums and a ganhook to the Upper Tanana people for safe keeping. In 1912 he took these cultural treasures to Lake Mansfield and in 1917 he took other objects to Tetlin. Both were on the United States side of the border and safe from Canadian authorities.

Where Chief Isaac was removing culturally important items from Canada to protect them from the Canadian authorities, in Mayo Northern Tutchone special constable Alfred Hunter was wearing the same style button shirt. As a Royal Canadian Mounted Police special constable Hunter was not issued a uniform and therefore wore his own fancy jacket to show his position. See figure # 93 of special constable Alfred Hunter and his wife in Mayo, sometime in the 1920s or 1930s. Hunter's jacket is more like the Tanana version than Chief Isaac's jacket, in that it has a double row of buttons and a fur collar.

Figure # 93, Special Constable Alfred Hunter wearing a button-shirt in Mayo in the 1920s or 30s. 6859 YA.

Dance shirts

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, as traded cloth was beginning to replace hide clothing, cloth dance shirts became popular to wear during potlatches and ceremonies. In *My Old People Say,* McClellan says:

> Many Yukon "dance shirts" resemble the well-known style from the coast tribes. They probably represent a cross between the old interior skin shirt and imported western-style garments, including a dash of military. Indeed, the coastal Tlingit often describe their own dance shirts as "gunana" (foreign), in this case referring to their inland neighbors of the Yukon and British Columbia. They are rather long, tailored affairs, usually of red or black and often beaded bib-like yokes. (McClellan 2001: 322)

This seems to indicate that at the very least the dance shirts were influenced by the early interior made hide tunics, to be adopted on the coast. Thus the status of the earlier valued hide clothing was carried on with the dance shirts. There are two distinguished dance shirt styles, the Athapaskan dance shirts with mostly floral designs and the coastal and Inland Tlingit dance shirts that often had clans or other images on them. The Tahltans also added clan images to their dance shirts. The Tlingit also made dance shirts with floral designs but it seemed that other than the Tahltans, Athapaskans did not put clan or other images on their dance shirts. McClellan states:

> Although the designs on dance shirts from the interior are preponderantly stylized plant forms, some Tagish and Inland Tlingit shirts and blankets are decorated with sib animal crests. (McClellan 2001: 322)

It also seemed that the Inland Tlingit and Tagish used the dance shirts more than the Tutchone:

> Among the more interior Tutchone, elaborate necklaces and bandoleers of dentalia necklaces with fine skin clothing were more frequent than the beaded or button-decorated dance shirts favoured by the southern tribes, but the face painting and ornaments were probably much the same, and dancing was, if anything, even more spirited than in the Tlingit-dominated bands. (McClellan 2001: 323)

An example of a possibly interior made dance shirt can be seen in the photograph in figure # 94. Johnny Fraser, centered, is wearing a floral patterned dance shirt. Elders I spoke to stated that Johnny Fraser had received the dance shirt and the frontlet from the Chilkat Tlingits from Klukwan. Someone from Klukwan had died and that person's items were given to Fraser. Nobody seems to know who made the dance shirt. It may even have been made in the interior and later returned there through Johnny Fraser. Fraser was the chief of the Champagne people and had strong ties with Klukwan. The Elders also said that later all of Johnny Fraser's First Nations items were sold to tourists. Later in this section I will discuss more about this dance shirt. This photograph was taken in the late 1940s, most likely during the Winter Carnival. It is an interesting photograph as it shows a whole cross section of Southern Tutchone ceremonial clothing from that time-period. Johnny Fraser is wearing a hat with the common crisscross design. The hat has feather plumes coming out of the top. His footwear incorporates a zigzag design. On the right side of the photo a lady is wearing a gopher skin robe. The woman beside her is also wearing some sort of skin garment and a pair of fancy mukluks. The two men on the left are wearing a hide pull-over coat and a floral beaded dance shirt. The dance shirt has a series of zigzag patterns going around the bottom of the shirt as well as a double row of the pattern going around the cuffs.

Figure # 94, Johnny Fraser and dance group, possible at the Winter Carnival, circa 1940s. 04.30, R. Hougan photograph.

Another well known dance shirt is the one that belonged to Johnny Joe. In figure # 95 we can see Johnny Joe wearing his dance shirt and a fancy hat at the MacBride Museum in the 1960s. This is the time he donated the dance shirt to the MacBride Museum.
In figure # 96 you can see the details of Johnnie Joe's dance tunic at the MacBride Museum. The design looks exactly like Johnny Fraser's dance shirt, but there are a couple of differences which I will explain after the illustrations.

Figure # 95, Johnny Joe with dance shirt. 92.96, MacBride Museum Photograph.

Figure # 96, detail of Johnny Joe's dance shirt, front bib & bottom of shirt. MacBride Museum.

In Johnny Joe's dance shirt there is trimming with small fringes extending from the middle of the bib area to just under the arms. Also, in the detail photographs we can see some fringes coming out of the back of the arm. There is no set of fringes coming out of the bib area, nor any other fringes in Johnny Fraser's shirt. Other than these noted items the dance shirts are identical, especially the details of the bead work. This creates the problem of Johnny Fraser's dance shirt originating in Klukwan while Johnny Joe's dance shirt originated from the Southern Tutchone settlement of Hutchi. Dinah Jim, Johnny Joe's granddaughter, stated that Johnny Joe's aunt was the maker of his dance shirt. At the time of our

conversation Dinah Jim did not remember her name. Johnny Joe and his family were originally from Hutchi, his dad being Chief Joe and mother Ts'ahl ma, both of Hutchi.

Based on the identical beadwork I conclude that Johnny Fraser's dance shirt was originally made in the Yukon by the same person, who is the aunt of Johnny Joe. Did she have a pattern she copied for the second dance shirt or did she make the two at the same time? There is also the possibility that the fringes were added later and that Fraser and Joe were wearing the same dance shirt. Garments were often modified after they were considered finished.

The following dance shirt in the photograph in figure # 97 was taken in 1948 and is an Inland Tlingit dance shirt. It is worn by Edgar Sydney who was born in Juneau, Alaska but moved and lived in Teslin. It is unknown where this dance shirt was made but I am suspecting in Teslin. It follows the standard design, bib in front, epaulettes on the shoulders and cuffs, all with floral beaded designs. Note the zigzag pattern around the bottom of the dance shirt which is done a bit like the dance shirt shown in figure # 94 on page 123. The dance shirt is on the man second from the left.

Figure # 97. Edgar Sydney wearing dance shirt in Teslin, 1948. D. Leechman photo. J2310 CMC.

In the following photograph in figure # 98, we can see a group of people waiting for the arrival of Queen Elizabeth in Carcross in July 1959. The man on the left is wearing a dance shirt with a different bead style design than the previous two. He is also wearing a military style medal on his dance shirt. The next two ladies are wearing the Tagish/Inland Tlingit style garments with the woman on the left wearing a dance shirt with the beaver crest and the woman beside her is wearing a dress with whale and/or fish designs on it. The second

lady is Mrs. Patsy Henderson, also known as Mrs. Edith Henderson. She is standing beside her husband, Mr. Patsy Henderson. The dance dress that Mrs. Patsy Henderson is wearing is almost the same as in an earlier photograph of the couple in *Their Own Yukon* on page 21. I suspect she made both dance dresses. Mrs. Edith Henderson is originally from Hutchi, making her a Southern Tutchone woman. Patsy Henderson is wearing his famous hide ceremonial clothing. To the right of Patsy Henderson is May Hume.

Figure # 98, First Nations people waiting to meet Queen Elisabeth II in 1959. 92.63, MacBride Museum.

This is a good transition to examine dance shirts that have images on them. This next photograph in figure # 99 is of a scene taken in Atlin, British Columbia during the 1918 potlatch. There are a number of dance shirt styles shown. The man on the right is holding two Crow drums and has a fairly fancy crow on his dance shirt. I am assuming this bird is Crow as this is a Crow/Frog clan hosted potlatch. The next man is wearing a simple hide pull-over shirt with some beadwork on the bib. The standing man in the middle is wearing a hide style pull-over fancy shirt with a lot of beaded designs on the chest. Although the photograph is not very clear, it appears like the man to the left of him is wearing an older style fancy hide tunic. Note the "V" breastbands across the front. The man on the far left wears a killer whale dance shirt. See figure # 100 for a coloured photograph of this particular dance shirt. He is holding a Crow and double fish drum. And in front of them all is a man wearing a Chilkat robe.


Figure # 99. Five Inland Tlingit dance shirts & Chilkat robe, Atlin, 1918. Courtesy of Atlin Historical Society.


Figure # 100 Inland Tlingit Killer Whale dance shirt, Atlin, Courtesy of Atlin Historical Society.

The killer whale dance shirt noted is figure # 99 is shown above in figure # 100. There are three killer whales images on it, a large one across the top and two joined at the tail. As the man is wearing a dance shirt and holding a drum that both show twin killer whales joined at the tails, I would guess he painted the drum and the dance shirt was made for him. There may be a special story from the coast about twin whales joined at the tail but if so I am not aware of it. The beaded designs on the shoulders and at the cuffs are slightly different than

the normal Inland Tlingit beadwork. They employ only one colour, white, and the design is basically a large outlined geometric shape. They look more like Tahltan than Tlingit beading. There is also the zigzag pattern added around the bottom of the dance shirt. The use of only black, white and red gives this dance shirt a bold appearance.

The next photograph in figure # 101 is also from Atlin and shows two dance shirts. The man on the left, possibly Lee T. Jack, is wearing either a lighter coloured cloth or hide made dance shirt. I have seen early made dance shirts that were lighter in colour such as shirts made with yellow fabric. From the appearance of the texture I think it is a fabric dance shirt. The shirt is very nicely beaded with a style that does not seem like the typical Inland Tlingit style. It may be that the dance shirt originated elsewhere. I am basing this on the bead style either from the Tagish or Tahltan people. In the center of the photograph a man, possibly Mr. S. Jack, is wearing a Frog clan dance shirt and holding the unique style Atlin dance stick or ganhook. These dance sticks are different from the Athapaskan as well as the Coastal Tlingit dance poles. I will be showing more of these Atlin style ganhooks in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death. Mr. Jack is also wearing a dance feather wane stuck in his headband. The rest of the women are all wearing either button or other blankets for the potlatch. The woman on the right is holding a feather dance wane, most likely a duster.

Figure # 101. Atlin potlatch scene, P-2667. Courtesy of Atlin Historical Society.

A final set of dance shirts is in figure # 102. These are two quite different dance shirts and were photographed by Catherine McClellan in 1950. They show the front and back of a beaded dance shirt with Crow in the front and a second lighter coloured dance shirt that has a drawing in the front and back. For my analysis of the two images see figure # 182 on page 197 in Chapter Five-Figurative Art.

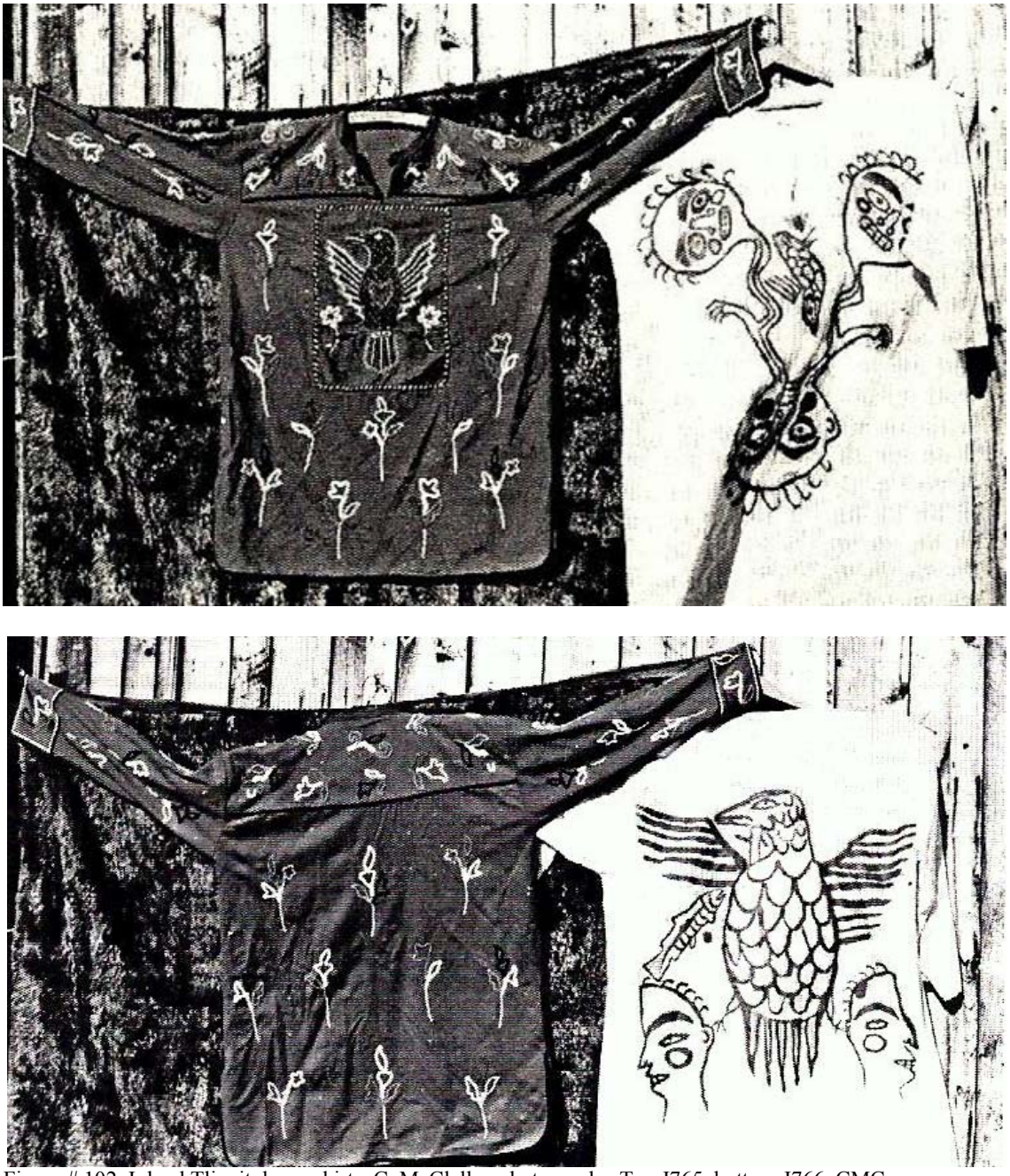


Figure # 102. Inland Tlingit dance shirts. C. McClellan photographs. Top J765, bottom J766. CMC

As we have looked at the various dance shirts you will note that no two are alike with the possible exception of Johnny Fraser's and Johnny Joe's dance shirts. If these are two different dance shirts then I assume they were made by the same person. Also here individuality is reflected in the wide range of dance shirt styles and designs.

Closing comments

I have shown a wide range of upper body garments that have its origins starting with the Geometric Period and continue into the Beaded Period. I have not looked at lower body garments. The porcupine embroidery in the hide leggings generally copies the breastband work patterns in the tunics, providing they were made at the same time. Once beads were used for floral & figurative designs lower body garments were no longer made. As you progress through this thesis you will be seeing more upper body garments, for example in Chapter Five-Figurative Art and Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death.

Chapter Four-Beaded & Floral Designs

Beaded period

While it is obvious that Yukon First Nations have created beadwork for over a hundred years, it is not clear where the designs came from. How did this tradition start? I have often heard from various non-First Nations people that missionaries taught the people floral bead designs. While this is the case for the First Nations people further to the east and south in Canada, I discovered that there were no missionary bead teaching activities in the Yukon. In fact in some areas of the Yukon, First Nations people may have been creating floral bead designs before the coming of missionaries in the area. Beads were commonly used in the south-central Yukon by the 1840s and most probably earlier in the north of the Yukon. At first the large Russian beads were used to replace the silverberry seeds on the breastband fringes of tunics and later the smaller beads replaced the porcupine embroidery on the breastbands. Beads were well known and readily available in the 1860's and it is this time period that saw the start of adoption of floral designs in the Yukon.

I identify Fort Yukon in Alaska as a focal point in tracing the history of floral bead work in the Yukon. Fort Yukon is not in the Yukon but in present day Alaska. None of the engravings and drawings of Athapaskan First Nations people in the Fort Yukon area before the 1860's show any floral designs. In the drawings and photographs from the 1870s and onwards there is a predominant amount of floral bead work present. One of the first examples of floral bead work in the Fort Yukon area is an engraving by Whymper from 1867 and shows a beaded firebag. You can see the image on page 57 of Kate Duncan's *Northern Athapaskan Art.*

The first missionaries in the area arrived in Fort Yukon in 1861. This was the Christian Missionary Society's Rev. William West Kirkby. From that point on the area had a steady presence of missionaries. For the first couple of decades it seems highly unlikely that these unwed male missionaries were teaching floral bead designs! I believe that the floral designs were introduced indirectly by the people who were supplying the beads. Fort Yukon was established in 1848 and trading in such items as beads had gone on for thirteen years before the first missionaries arrived on the scene. I will come back to the role of the trading forts in the Yukon later in this section.

The Yukon Beaded Period starts in the 1860s in the Fort Yukon area and carries on until World War Two. The Beaded Period makes its presence first in the north of the Yukon Territory and a later appearance is made in the south. I feel that the Beaded Period is one of the most artistically expressive periods of the Yukon First Nations people. When beads became available the creator of the image or design had a sudden choice of color and surface quality (shiny to matte). Quills could be dyed but there was a limited choice in color. Black and white colors were used as these are the natural color of the quill. Other colors included varieties of reds and blues. These were colors that people could create from earth or plant dyes. The dyed quills were very bright and beautiful at first but would fade over time. The arrival of beads must have meant less work, increased choice and more durability.

In the coming sections I will give an overview of the regional floral beaded styles. Later I will examine beaded birds, mammals and fish in Chapter Five-Figurative Art. I will be using the following breakdown of floral design factors: main or central flower designs, leaf & secondary flower designs, stem work, and background. The main flower design is often the center or focus point of the overall design. See examples in figure # 103 for various main flower patterns. The first on the left is a flower pattern that is known as the "Annie Ned" pattern. This is a Southern Tutchone floral design. The next is a common four-pedal with center bud design often thought of as a rosette. In Kate Duncan's *A Special Gift: The*

Kutchin Beadwork Tradition, she identifies a wider pedaled motif for the Kutchin (Gwich'in) as 'dog paw' based on the tracks that the Gwich'in say dogs make. There may be more pedals as seen in the next example. This is a five pedal flower design but the pedals overlap. The last is a Kaska main flower design, a more complex flower pattern. The Gwich'in commonly made complex main flower designs.

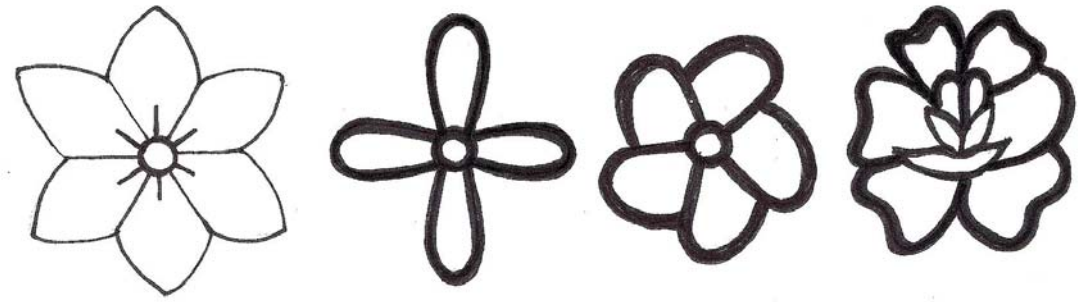


Figure # 103. Various Yukon First Nations main flower bead designs. UvK drawing.

There is an unlimited variety of main flower designs from simple to complex, but not all floral designs are created around a main flower. The main flowers designs often have stem works coming out of the main flower and it is on those stem works that various secondary flowers and/or leafs are attached to fill out the overall design. There are various styles of stem works. See figure # 104 for five examples of stem designs.

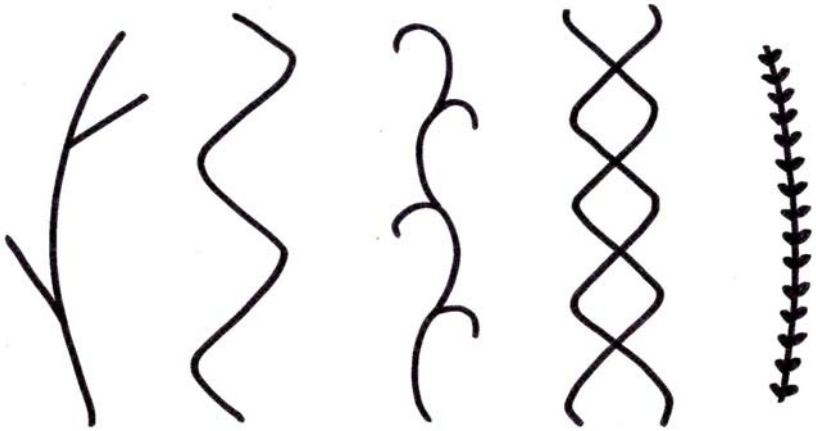


Figure # 104. Various Yukon First Nations floral stem designs. UvK drawing.

The first stem on the left is a simple common stem. It can head off in any direction and sometimes has other stems coming off of it. It does not have a repeating pattern like the following stems. The next stem example I call the zigzag stem but it is also known as the "S" stem pattern. This pattern is used often by Yukon First Nations and not only in bead work as I illustrated in Chapter Two-Geometric & Decorative Arts. The next is a "Y" stem pattern. This stem pattern starts with a short curved stem and then a new stem starts at the top curve of that stem. The next stem shown can be thought of as an "X" or double zigzag pattern. The last stem shown is one with a series of bead outcrops along the shaft. Duncan states that this is indentified by the Kutchin as "mice running". In my casual conversations with Athapaskan beaders in Fairbanks, Alaska, I was told this pattern was "grouse tracks". The leaves and secondary flowers were attached to the stem. In figure # 105 is a series of four leaf patterns that would be attached to the stem works.

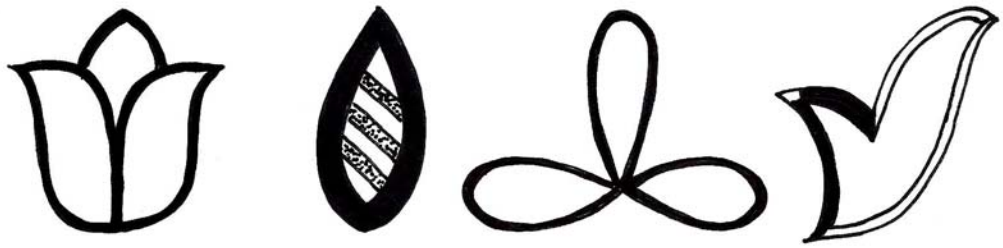


Figure # 105. Various Yukon First Nations floral leaf designs. UvK drawing.

Duncan identifies the motif on the left as a split-bell design. The next leaf is a simple leaf design with an added pattern in the middle. There are variations to the simple leaves, like showing a bent, a rounded appearance or outcrops. The next is a cloverleaf design that the Kutchin (Gwich'in) identify as ptarmigan foot (Carney & Duncan 1997: 32). The Kutchin descriptions for these motifs seem to be limited to the Gwich'in. Other groups may identify the designs differently. I think of this motif as a 3-pedal or clubs design. There are other patterns that look like hearts, diamonds and spades. They may very well have their origins from playing cards. Some beaders adopted patterns from various sources. For example, the old T. Eaton's catalogue which was first published in 1884 and by the Klondike Gold Rush, if not before, was available to people throughout the Yukon. These patterns could be seen on the catalogue's products such as dresses, curtains, table cloths and so forth. One of the traits of Athapaskan beaders is their fondness for adopting new patterns. The last leaf design is a simple Upper Yukon type of leaf pattern. The Inland Tlingit leaf patterns of this type are often more complex than the one above.

Overall the basic motifs: flowers, leaves and stems, can be combined in various patterns making up any possible combination of design. There may be only a few flowers or leaves with or without stems with a large amount of the background showing or the background could be mostly covered with flowers, leaves and stems. The flower and leaf designs vary from simple to complex. Added to this mix is the choice of colours. An example of the central flower, stem, and leaf motifs combined can be seen in the next drawing, figure # 106. This drawing is based on a sled bag that is in the Milwaukee Public Museum. It was collected by Brigadier General Henry Mitchell at Fort Egbert in Alaska. That fort is situated in Han territory. You can see a photograph of the bag in Kate Duncan's *Northern Athapaskan Art* on page 141.

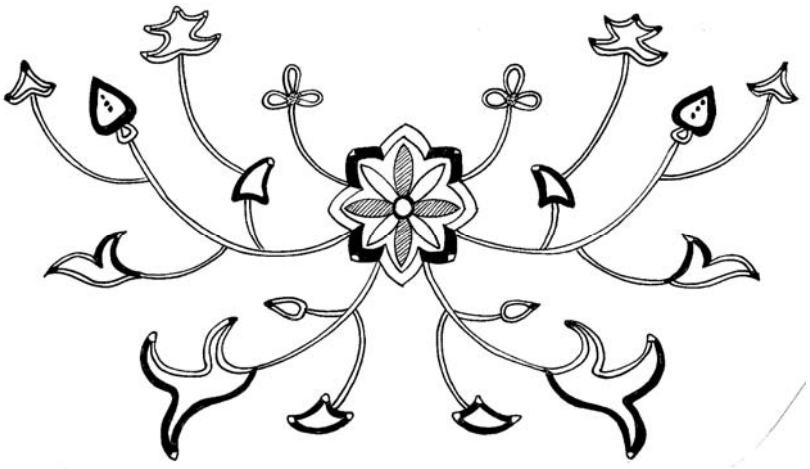


Figure # 106. Example of combination of main flower, stem and leaf design. Based on Han sled bag cover floral bead design. UvK drawing.

In the above example there is the main flower at the center with common stem work extending out. There is a variety of leaf designs at the ends of all the stems and one pair functioning as a joint for another stem. There is a lot of the background hide showing and while the main flower is solid in design, the centers of the leaf designs have a negative space that shows the background. Around the end of the flap is a fabric breastband that is also beaded. The pattern around the edge is using a series of four pedal flower motifs and a variation of the "X" pattern stem work. See figure # 107 below for my drawing of the center section of the design.

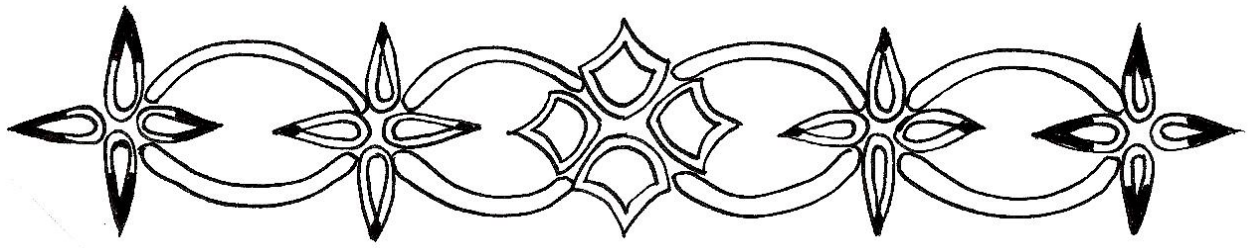


Figure # 107. Example of trim flower and stem design. Based on Han sled bag cover floral bead design. UvK drawing.

It is this breakdown of floral motifs that I use to analyse designs from different regions in the Yukon. There are five distinct floral bead styles in the Yukon region but I only show four of the areas the different styles were practiced on the map in figure # 108. The fifth style was the Mountain Dene style and the Mountain Dene integrated into Northern Tutchone and Kaska communities so are not shown on the map.

I will start off with the Gwich'in style [A] as they were the first people to create floral beadwork. The designs have their roots in the already established floral bead designs from up the Mackenzie River. At Fort Yukon there is a major floral design change that occurs up the Yukon River and Tanana Rivers away from Fort Yukon. For the Yukon River area I will call this the upper Yukon River style [B]. Since the events that caused the changes for the upper Yukon River style are the same for the Tanana River, their beading style is almost identical in structure. Duncan classes the two groups together as the 'The Yukon-Tanana Region'. The upper Yukon River style includes the Han, Northern and Southern Tutchone, Yukon Kaska, Tagish and Tanana. It is here I also add the Mountain Dene style. While not formally recognized in the Yukon, the Mountain Dene have been living in and out of the eastern Yukon for centuries and in the last century a number of Mountain Dene families settled in the eastern and later central Yukon. The other two styles are the Inland Tlingit [C] and the Tahltan [D] at the very south of the Yukon. I have noticed that four of the regional floral bead styles are situated around river systems. These river systems are all connected with trade routes. Refer to the map in figure # 108 for the river systems: The Gwich'in with the (1) Mackenzie and (2) Porcupine Rivers; the Han, Northern & Southern Tutchone, Kaska, and Tagish with the (3) Yukon River. In the Yukon River drainage these main rivers; the (8) Stewart, (7) White and (9) Pelly Rivers all flow into the Yukon River and these areas all worked in the upper Yukon River style. The (4) Tanana River also flows into the Yukon River downriver from Fort Yukon. The Inland Tlingit style was connected with the (5) Taku and Tulsequah Rivers and the Tahltan style with the (6) Stikine River. On this map I also pointed out for reference sake the (11) Peel River which starts into the northeastern Yukon and flows into the Mackenzie River and the (10) Copper River in the southeastern mainland Alaska. The Peel River was an area that was occupied by both the Gwich'in and Northern Tutchone. The Copper River is the homeland of the Ahtna people.

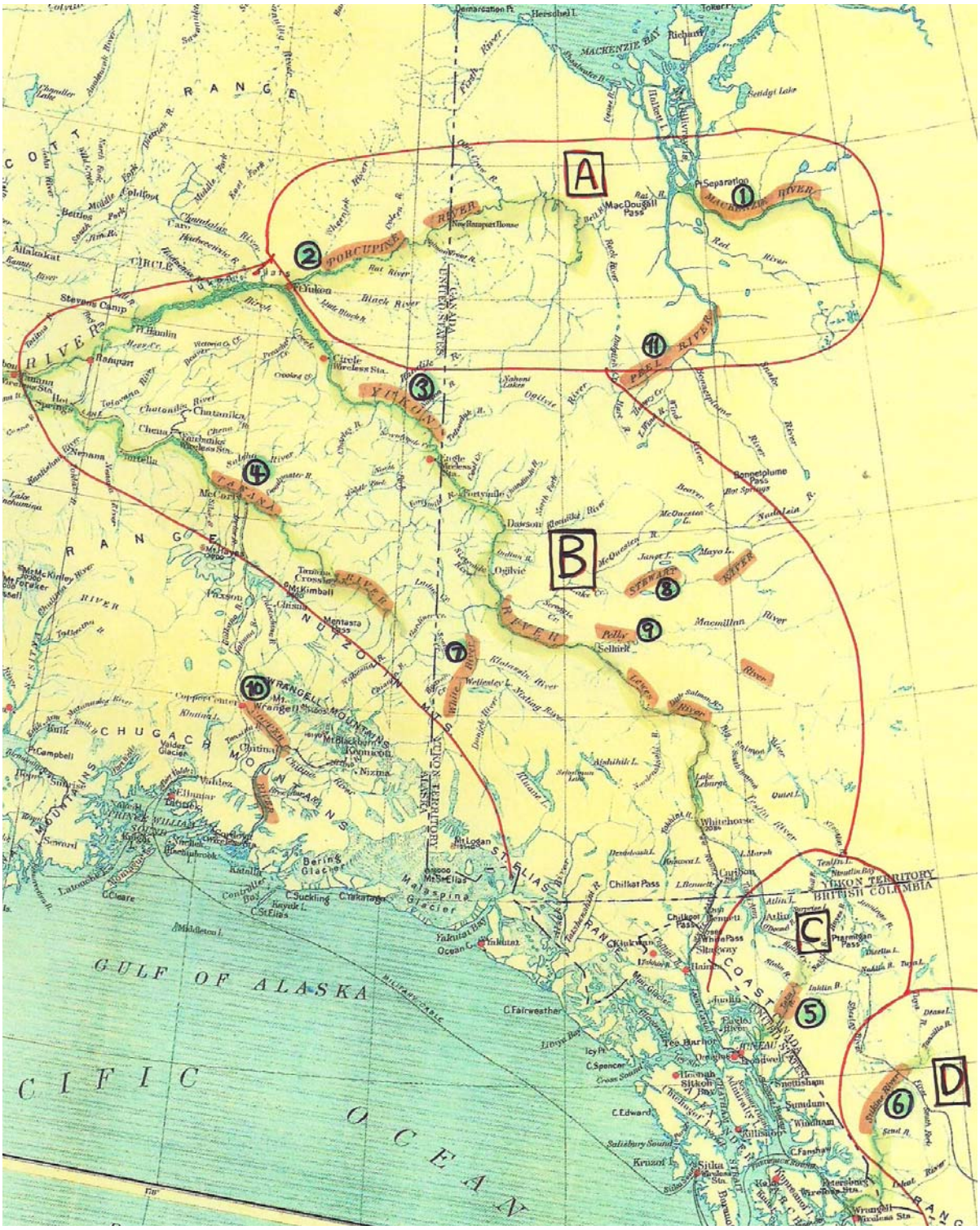


Figure # 108. River systems that are related to the development of beading styles in the Yukon.

Gwich'in bead designs

The Gwich'in people are famous in the Yukon for their bead work and they are the earliest Yukon First Nations people to use beaded floral designs. The Gwich'in style is basically the same as the bead styles from further up the Mackenzie River. When you look at

the bead work from the different groups of people all along the Mackenzie River you will see the same basic floral design building blocks. They use large complex and colourful central and secondary flowers and leaves. They use very little stem work and cover most to all of the background. In the Yukon the Gwich'in are the only people that make beadwork this way. The southern Elders refer to the Gwich'in style as the "Old Crow" style since the only Gwich'in community in the Yukon is Old Crow, on the banks of the Porcupine River. This is what Duncan says in *A Special Gift: The Kutchin Beadwork Tradition* on page 29:

> Kutchin floral beadwork belongs to the Great Slave Lake-Mackenzie River style region…The beadwork designs of each of the groups are similar enough to warrant classification together. (Carney & Duncan 1997: 29)

The reason that the Mackenzie River, the Porcupine River and Fort Yukon had the same style was the route that the Hudson Bay Company took for trading purposes. The bead style was established along the southern area of the Mackenzie River-Slave Lake area and as the Hudson Bay Company established trading posts and forts further down the Mackenzie River the bead style was copied. The Hudson Bay Company used many Métis and Indian workers. When they established a new post, the wives of these workers settled and the local women were able to copy the bead style. This is what Duncan says in *A Special Gift: The Kutchin Beadwork Tradition* in page 26:

> Floral beadwork was first produced among Athapaskan speakers by those around Great Slave Lake, but art quickly diffused north and west. The large beads known at Fort McPherson came from Russia and were traded in from Kutchin living farther west, but seed beads and floral designs arrived there with the Hudson's Bay Company and women married to Hudson's Bay men. When Loucheux women married Hudson's Bay men, they worked alongside, sharing ideas and learning from other Company wives who had moved to the area with their husbands. (Duncan Carney & Duncan 1997: 26)

The Hudson's Bay worker's First Nations and Métis wives themselves did learn from the missionary schools that both the Anglican and Catholic Churches established in the upper Mackenzie River-Slave Lakes areas. For example, the Grey Nuns arrived in Fort Chipewyan in 1849 to establish a residential school. In the coming decades they opened more schools further north and down the Mackenzie River.

The Hudson Bay was interested in expanding its fur trade so was actively exploring. In an effort to seek out the distant tribes to the west of the Mackenzie River the Hudson Bay Company established the Peel River Post on the Peel River at the junction of the Mackenzie River in 1840. This post later became Fort McPherson. Using the Peel River Post as a base the Hudson Bay Company travelled to the west and after a number of unsuccessful explorations finally discovered the "Youcon" (Yukon) River in 1845. See the 1834 map in figure # 109 of the Mackenzie River and the dates of the establishment of trading posts and forts. Note that those forts with the (NWC) behind them were established by the Northwest Company, the main competitor to the Hudson Bay Company. The two companies merged in 1821 and kept the Hudson Bay Company name. You can see the establishment of forts from the late 1700s into the early 1800s steadily moving north down the Mackenzie River. Notice that on this 1834 map it leaves the whole of the interior of the Yukon and Alaska blank as it was still unexplored.

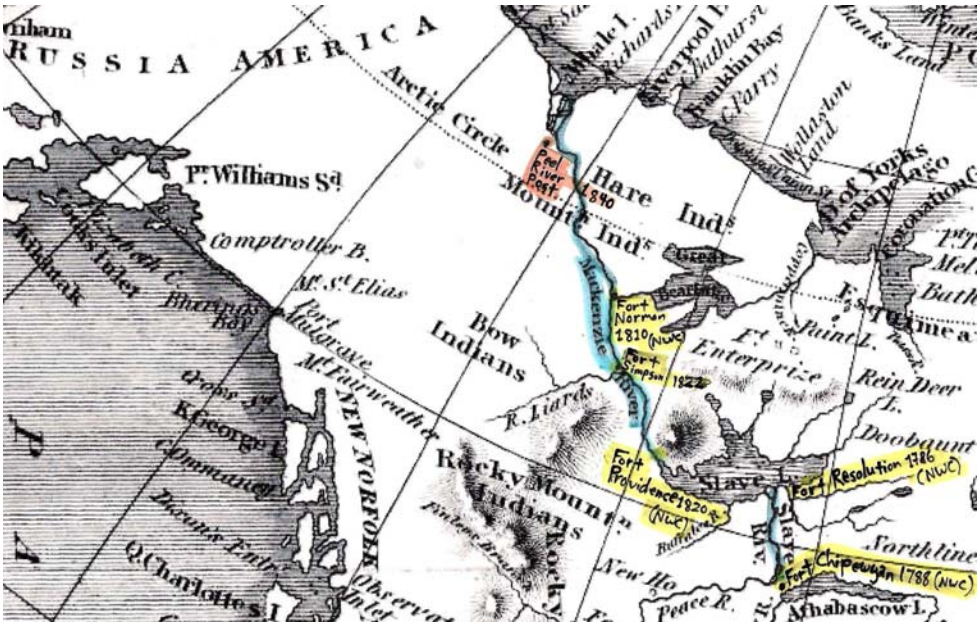


Figure # 109. Mackenzie River and establishment of main trading Forts up until 1840.

You may note in the next map that there is not a river linking the Mackenzie and Porcupine Rivers, so an overland route had to be discovered through the Richardson Mountains. The local First Nations guides were less than willing to allow the Hudson Bay Company to disrupt their own established trading routes, so the Hudson Bay Company had to finally use guides that were from further up the Mackenzie River. These guides had no interest in the trade situation in the area. A pass was found through the Richardson Mountains and they discovered the Yukon River. The new fur trading areas were successful.

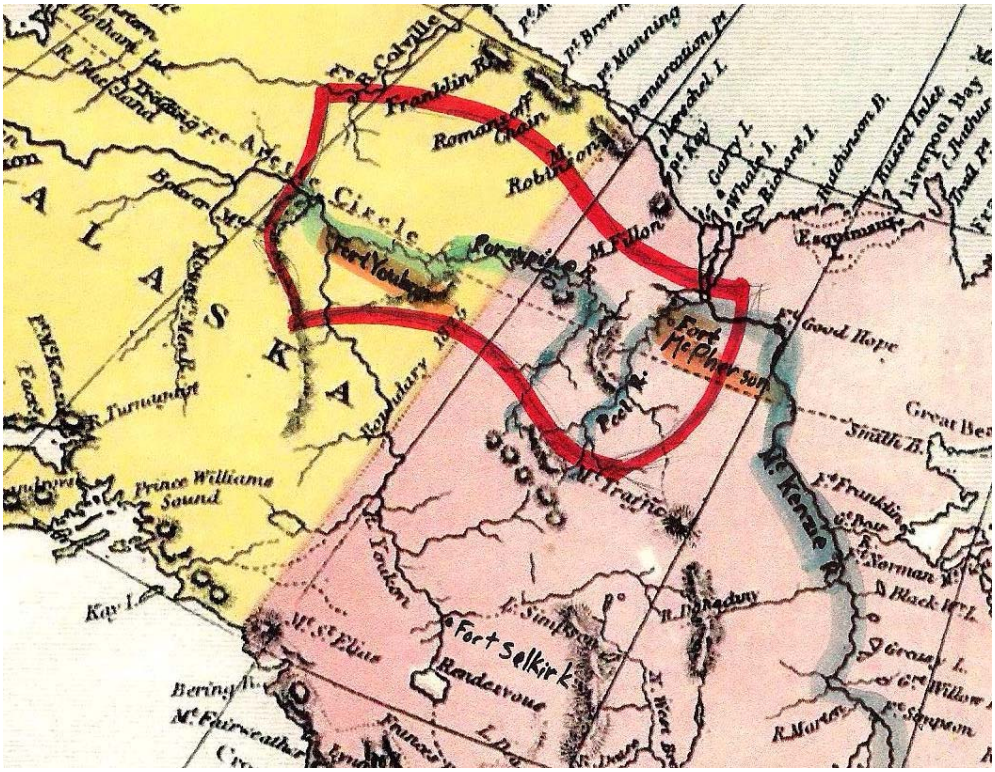


Figure # 110. Gwich'in traditional territory. 1878 map.

Because of the required infrastructure Fort Yukon was not established until 1848. Now that a trade route existed from Fort McPherson to Fort Yukon there was a steady flow of Hudson Bay workers moving up and down the Porcupine River. All along the river the women were exposed to the floral designs from the Hudson Bay workers and the families they brought with them. These floral designs had their source from the upper Mackenzie River and that style became firmly implanted into the northern Yukon. See figure # 110 of an 1878 map that shows the Gwich'in traditional territory as well as Fort McPherson and Fort Yukon.

Next I will examine some examples of Gwich'in floral bead designs. Figure # 111 shows a wall pocket that was collected by H.A. Conroy in 1911. It is presently in the Canadian Museum of Civilization. It was collected from the Gwich'in on the Mackenzie River.

Figure # 111 Mackenzie River Gwich'in wall pocket. Collected 1911. VI-H-13 CMC.

The working surface is mostly filled with beads. Only small areas of the background show through. The background colour for this wall pocket is black. This is a common colour for wall pockets, sled bags and baby belts. The distinctive feature of Gwich'in beading is the use of flower and leaf designs with minimal stem work. The flowers and leaves dominate the picture area and are quite elaborate, using many colors and twisting and turning pedals and leaves. In this wall pocket there are three sets of flower groups, two at the bottom part and one set at the top. In the next figure, # 112 is a wall pocket collected by H.A. Conroy in 1911 from the Gwich'in on the Mackenzie River. It states in the museum notes that this wall

pocket was made around 1900. It has a different design: three small pockets at the top and a large one at the bottom. The beads are on black fabric but the pockets are part of a red fabric background. I point this out because Duncan states:

> Hide, black velvet or velveteen, and more recently, felt, are the grounds used by the Kutchin beadworker. Velvet has been popular since sometime in the nineteenth century. Although red wool has been beaded on by neighbouring upper Yukon groups for years, no one had heard of Kutchin women ever beading on red. Black wool, which is common in the neighbouring upper Yukon area as well as among the Cree and to a lesser extent on Great Slave Lake, has rarely been used by the Kutchin. (Carney & Duncan 1997: 37)

The example below supports Duncan's observations that the Gwich'in did not bead on red material but did use it in their work. The bottom of the wall pocket has a floral design that is symmetrical and each side is made up of a main flower and has a 'mouse walking' stem work connecting to four secondary flowers. There are five other tertiary leaf/berry/bud motifs connected to the overall design. The design is weighted at the bottom, that is, the bead work is on the bottom one-third of the section. I believe this is done for an aesthetic effect.

Figure # 112. Mackenzie River Gwich'in wall pocket. Collected 1911. VI-H-1 CMC.

Duncan writes about the difference between the eastern and western Gwich'in floral designs. Turn-of-the-century Loucheux (Fort McPherson) work is more similar to that produced around Great Slave Lake, while beadwork from the western Kutchin shows a tendency towards simplification and regularization. Even in the twentieth century there is still

a closer link between eastern Kutchin and Great Slave work. (Carney & Duncan 1997: Page 29)

This makes sense as there was more direct contact up and down the Mackenzie River with the origins of the missionary school beading tradition. The route from Fort McPherson to Fort Yukon required an overland route for part of the way and there were no trading posts between the two forts except the logistics transfer aid station of Lapierre House, which was prohibited from trading. So while the western Gwich'in were seeing examples of the Great Slave Lake beading style passing through their territory with the Hudson's Bay Company workers, they did not have the more direct contact that the Fort McPherson Gwich'in had with the Great Slave Lake style. In Barbara Hail and Kate Duncan's *Out of the North*, Duncan writes about the Gestalt Visual Perception Theory:

> Students of visual perception group their observations under a broad principle they believe to be universal, the "law of the good gestalt." "Gestalt" refers to perceptual totality, and "good gestalt" to the most easily perceived mental order or structure of that totality. The "good gestalt," then, is the simplest one, because "any stimulus pattern tends to be seen in such a way that the resulting structure is as simple as the given conditions permit. (Arnhiem 1974:53). When ambiguous stimuli are presented, the brain chooses the least complex alternative by simplifying and regularizing the visual pattern, particularly by making it symmetrical, by leveling (dropping off information), and by sharpening (enhancing or exaggerating information). (Hail & Duncan 1989: 75-76)

Since Fort McPherson was an established trading post and the Gwich'in in the area had continuous contact with the Mackenzie River beading style they would have been able to copy it more closely. The Gwich'in along the Porcupine River would have only been able to see the beadwork in passing and thus their copies would have been simpler. This explains why the western Gwich'in floral bead designs were slightly simpler than the eastern Gwich'in style. It would be the western style that the Yukon Gwich'in created. In the following figure, # 113 is an Athapaskan baby belt from the Canadian Museum of Civilization. It was obtained by the Canadian Museum of Civilization with no providence but the Museum has identified this belt as Gwich'in.

Figure # 113. Gwich'in baby belt. VI-I-82, CMC

Based on the gestalt theory this would be a western style Gwich'in baby belt. When you compare the floral designs to the previous floral designs in figures # 111 & 112 you can see the baby belt's floral designs are slightly simpler. Below in figure # 114 is a comparison between a detail of floral design from the baby belt and wall pocket.

Figure # 114. Comparison of Gwich'in baby belt (left) and wall pocket floral design (right). VI-I-82 & VI-H-13 CMC

In the baby belt there are less colour variations and less secondary flowers and leaf motifs. The baby belt motifs are more spread out leaving bigger gaps with more of the background showing and not compacted like the wall pocket floral design. There is more notable use of stem work in the baby belt which allows filling the space. Based on the Gestalt Theory the baby belt would fall into the western Gwich'in floral style.

The gestalt theory plays an even bigger role when you examine the floral bead designs from the upper Yukon River, as I will do in the next section. If you want to learn more about Gwich'in floral bead designs I would recommend Kate Duncan's *A Special Gift: The Kutchin Beadwork Tradition.* It gives much more detail and information about Gwich'in floral designs.

Upper Yukon River floral style

I believe that the upper Yukon River style originated from the upper Yukon River First Nations (Han and Northern Tutchone) when they travelled to Fort Yukon and saw the floral designs that were already becoming established there. As part of their trade network the upper Yukon River people travelled to Fort Yukon to trade. Dall records that both the Han and the Northern Tutchone visited Fort Yukon from the Upper Yukon in 1867. These upper Yukon people were even more removed than the western Gwich'in as there were no Hudson's Bay traders, workers or families passing through their territory. They would only have been able to observe the floral beadwork for a short time while at the Fort Yukon trading post. This would have also included any Cree or Métis Hudson's Bay Company workers at Fort Yukon. This is another example of the gestalt theory at work where the upper Yukon beading style is overall simpler than the Gwich'in beading style.

I will add here that the Hudson's Bay Company did establish Fort Selkirk at the junction of the Yukon and Pelly Rivers in 1848 but this fort was pillaged and destroyed without loss of life by the Chilkat Tlingits in 1852. There were also earlier posts at Pelly Banks and Francis Lake and both failed before the pillaging of Fort Selkirk. There were often no women present at the fort until the very end when there were two wives of workers. One wife and worker was Indian and possibly the other was too. The artistic impact to the area was negligible. The influence for the Han and Northern Tutchone came from Fort Yukon. The Hudson's Bay Company operated Fort Yukon from 1848 until 1869. The United States bought Alaska in 1867 and in 1869 Fort Yukon was confirmed to be in American Territory. The Hudson's Bay Company had to cease operations and move their operation into Canadian territory. They moved up the Porcupine River and further away from the Han and Northern Tutchone but by this time the floral beading tradition was starting to be established for the

Gwich'in and was just beginning to take root in the upper Yukon River. I have not come across any documentation of how and when exactly the Han and Northern Tutchone started creating floral beadwork.

The earliest evidence of beadwork I have seen from the upper Yukon area is a photograph taken during the Schwatka 1883 exploration from Haines Alaska to down the Yukon River. This photograph was taken in Fort Selkirk and shows a number of First Nations men in canoes. See figure # 115 and # 116 for details of the photograph. In the left image of figure # 116 a man is holding a paddle and it appears he has a beaded firebag hanging around his neck. The front man in the right hand canoe in figure # 115 appears to be wearing a possibly beaded bandoleer or the strap for a bag. They are in fact wearing a mixture of clothing. The standing man in the left photograph appears to have lines running down the front of his trousers and this may be the traditional hide trousers with the porcupine embroidery running down the front. The front man in the canoe in the right photograph is wearing a western shirt that has a series of pinstripes running down the shirt. The man behind him may also be wearing a firebag.

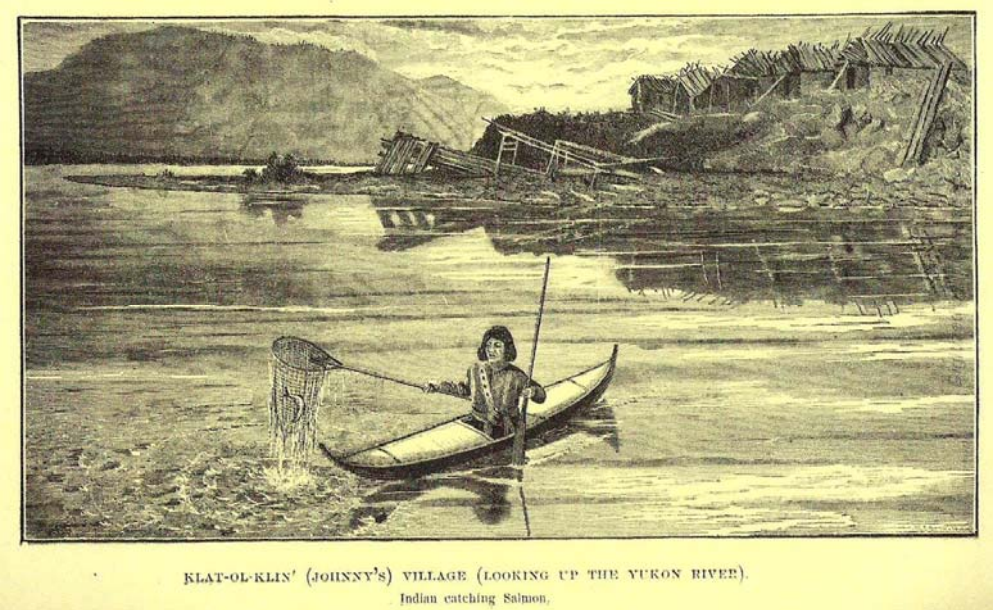
Figure # 115. First Nation men in canoes at Fort Selkirk 1883. Lt. Frederick Schwatka collection, 94/102 #19, YA.

Figure # 116. Details of First Nation men in canoes at Fort Selkirk 1883. Lt. Frederick Schwatka collection, 94/102 #19, YA.

This photograph shows that at least by 1883 there are beaded firebags in use in the upper Yukon River area. Schwatka does not describe any bead work or even the native clothing but as we can see in the photograph, western clothing. He does sometimes mention those "tattered and filthy beyond measure" western traded clothing (*Along Alaska's Great River,* page 228). Schwatka does write about the beads he saw when he examined an abandoned trading post just on the United States side of the Alaska-Yukon border:

> The Indians evidently must have surmised that the trader would return, as they respected the condition in which he left the building, in a manner most creditable to their honesty, no one entered or disturbed in since he left. They evidently care little for beads as ornaments, for I saw none of them wearing that much coveted Indian adornment, while great quantities were scattered around the trader's floor, having been trampled into the ground. At no place on the river did I find such an eagerness for beads as characterizes the American Indians of milder climes, but nowhere did I see such total disregard for them as was shown here. (Schwatka 1885: 259-260)

On the one hand Schwatka states that he is impressed with the Indians' honesty by leaving the cabin untouched and on the other hand he states that the Indians do not care for the beads since they left them *untouched* on the cabin floor. The beads were left on the cabin floor because the First Nations people did not enter the cabin so would have not been able to touch the beads. I do not think Schwatka paid any attention to the clothing worn by First Nations people except western clothing that was traded into the area. His photographer took photographs of First Nations people who appear to be wearing beaded items such as firebags and possibly bandoleers. See figure # 117 for an engraving from Schwatka's book *Along Alaska's Great River* on page 253. It shows a Han man at Johnny's Village which is on the Canadian side of the Alaskan border. It is from a time before Schwatka arrived at the abandoned trading post. You can see the Han fisherman wearing what appears to be a beaded strap, possibly for a firebag. I therefore dismiss his claim that upper Yukon First Nations people had a total disregard for beads since he had already seen people wearing articles with beadwork.



KLAT-OL-KLIN' (JOHNNY'S) VILLAGE (LOOKING UP THE YUKON RIVER).
Indian catching Salmon.

Figure # 117. Han fisherman with beaded strap. Page 253, *Along Alaska's Great River.*

With the sale of Alaska from Russia to the United States and the Russian American Company becoming the Alaska Commercial Company, a series of American trading posts opened after heading up the Yukon River from Fort Yukon. One such post was Fort Reliance in 1874. While the Alaska Commercial Company started out in the fur trade it later moved more toward supplying prospectors and miners. By 1888 the prospecting/mining camp of Fortymile was firmly established and became the 'headquarters' of the prospectors and miners in the area. Their only concern was the search for gold. The Canadian government launched an exploration expedition in 1887 headed by geologist George Dawson. While Dawson has been given the title of Father of Canadian Anthropology for his research into Canada's Native people it seems he did little such research in the Yukon. As a geologist in the Yukon he was mostly concerned about the upkeep of Canadian law and mapping of land. I found no useful reference material from Dawson's exploration.

In the 1890s white people started to collect artifacts directly from upper Yukon First Nations people. It seems the first person to do so was Charles Hall, who collected from 1894 to 1901. There was one earlier artifact that is listed as being from the western subarctic at the Glenbow Museum, a beaded gun case, AC 236. It was collected by Colonel William D. Antrobus of the Northwest Mounted Police and purchased by the museum in 1968. In Duncan's *Northern Athapaskan Art* she lists it as a Yukon-Tanana Region style collected in 1886. If so this would be the earliest beaded artifact collected from the Yukon-Tanana region. It leaves me with a question: how did Colonel William D. Antrobus collect the artifact when all his service was in Alberta and Saskatchewan? The bead work also looks Tagish-Inland Tlingit, as there is a lot of the background showing. The designs are like the scroll type patterns that the Tlingit used and not the floral style of Athapaskan bead work. Since this gun case was collected in Canada I think this is a Tagish or Inland Tlingit gun case. Colonel William D. Antrobus was dismissed from the Northwest Mounted Police in 1891 for falsifying documents, stealing, ordering his quartermaster to make false entries in the post ledger and drunkenness. All this leads me to question the provenance of this gun case. See figure # 118 of the gun case and two details of the bead work. As you will see later with other examples of gun cases, they all followed mostly the same pattern: a beaded band at the top, another beaded band at the top third and a beaded area at the bottom. It is often finished with a double split tab at the muzzle end.

Figure # 118 Western subarctic gun case collected by Colonel William D. Antrobus. AC 236, Glenbow Museum.

The designs are beaded on a brown coloured fabric. Later in this section I will be examining Inland Tlingit beading styles and you will be able to see the similarities. In the next section I will examine a series of beaded floral designs from the upper Yukon River region so that you can also become familiar with the upper Yukon River region style.

Han bead designs

The first group of the Upper Yukon Style that I will discuss is the Han bead styles from the Dawson City area. The Han, like most of the groups from the Yukon, have two styles. This is a result of being influenced by the groups neighbouring them. The one style is an upper Yukon River style while the other has Gwich'in influences. Since the Han were neighbours to the Gwich'in this only makes sense. In the following example, figure # 119, is a gun case at the Dawson City Museum that is done in the upper Yukon River style. The bead work is largely based on the stem work that connects a series of simple four or five petal flowers. Between the flowers along the stem are a couple of smaller stems and leaf-like motifs. There are also a couple of leaves coming out of the stems themselves. The tip is shaped in the common double tab design.

Figure # 119, Han gun case and both ends of the case. 1983.16.10, DCM.

The beadwork is on the hide itself and a lot of the background is showing. Some of the flowers and leaf designs have more detail while others have simpler designs. With the stem work connecting the various floral/leaf motifs, we have the main ingredients of the typical upper Yukon River style.

In figure # 120 we can see the hide bag with the same combination of stem work connecting various flowers and leaf designs. There is a lot of the hide showing, just as on the gun case. This bag is on display at the Dawson City Museum. It is a common example of many of the bag flap designs from the upper Yukon River (and Tanana River). The design has a central six-petal white flower with a series of thin stems coming out of the flower at four points. These stems branch off into other stems and the resulting twelve stems all end with either leaf -, floral- or berry motifs. They are all beaded solid without negative space. The colors are mostly singular around the edge while the other colors occupy the center area. Note its similarity to the example in figure # 106 on page 133.


Figure # 120, bead design on bag. DCM.

As I mentioned earlier, the Han are influenced by the upper Yukon beading style as well as the Gwich'in. The following example in # 121 is Chief Isaac's "Chief's Coat" that was shown in figure # 87 on page 117 in the previous chapter. This image shows the top back of the coat with an elaborate floral design that covers a lot of the area. The central design appears to be solid and derives from the western Gwich'in beading style. It does not look at all like the central floral design seen in the bag in figure # 120. When we look at the bead work along the edge of the opening of the coat in figure # 122 the work appears to be more in the upper Yukon River style. The stem is running the length of the coat with a series of four pedal flowers and smaller stems growing out of the main stem that lead to what appears to be "forget-me-not" flowers. There are also simple green leaves growing out of the stem. This bead design is in the upper Yukon beading style.


Figure # 121, Detail of back of Chief Isaac's coat. Han bead design with Gwich'in influence. DCM

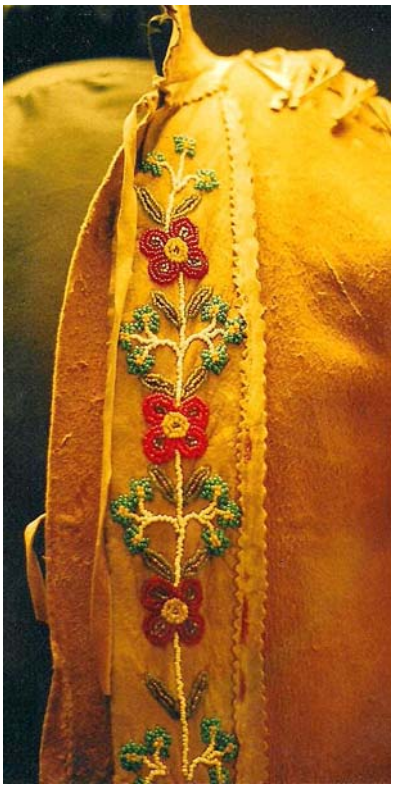


Figure # 122, Detail of Chief Isaac's coat. Upper Yukon River beading style. DCM

Another example of the Gwich'in beading influence on the upper Yukon beading style can be seen in this pair of Han mitts in figure # 123. There is less use of stems and the floral designs cover a large part of the area that has the beads on it. Again, this design is different from the bag in figure # 120.


Figure # 123, Han bead design on mitts. DCM

The next group of bead work is from the Northern Tutchone people. The Northern Tutchone style is typically in the upper Yukon River beading style and is the only group that seems to have consistent bead designs over their whole territory. The Southern Tutchone, being closer to the Tlingits, had a slightly different style. Nevertheless, the Southern Tutchone style still had the ingredients of the upper Yukon River style but they only differed in the details.

Northern Tutchone bead designs

Northern Tutchone bead work is the same as the Han upper Yukon River style with the exception of using more outcrops or "grouse tracks" in the stem work. I will examine some examples and you will see that there is a lot of use of stem work, fewer flower and leaf motifs and no clustering of floral motifs. This allows for a lot of the background to show. In figure # 124 is a photograph of Alice Hager and Mary Hager in Mayo in 1937. Both women are wearing baby belts, quite nicely illustrating how these belts are used. Note the added detail to the stem work and the complex flower designs. On the baby belt to the right the stem work is coming out of the flower and divides into three stems at the end of the belt. Each stem ends with a leaf design. For the baby belt on the left it appears as if the stem work is itself one of the main elements. The stem work comes out of the bottom of a central flower and goes in opposite directions to a(another?) flower, being the main connecting design of that unit. That pattern is repeated around the baby belt. In addition this belt has a series of tussles coming out of the bottom edge.

Figure # 124. Alice and Mary Hager, Mayo, 1937. Claude Tidd coll., 7504, YA.

A more recent baby belt shown in figure # 125 was made by Ms. Annie McGinty from Pelly Crossing. This belt was made in 1967 and was gifted to the Glenbow Museum in 1992. Although recently made, the bead style is similar to the older style. There is a central

flower with stems leading to two other flowers. As with the Hager sisters' baby belts, there are a series of small beaded outcrops along its length. As mentioned earlier, the Gwich'in identify these stem outcrops as mouse tracks and the Athapaskans in Fairbanks identify these as grouse tracks. The flowers are treated differently from Southern Tutchone and Tagish people, with green leaves peaking from behind the petals. The treatment of the flowers is more complex with numerous color changes.

The design is placed on a black fabric with a red fabric strip along the edges. There is a series of yellow beads bordering the red trim, maybe a distant reference to the repeating dot motif. This work also includes a wide range of colors including four different blues. There seems to be a bit of freedom to the color use in this work, maybe making the belt colorful for the baby it is intended to carry.

Figure # 125, Annie McGinty's baby belt. AC 539, Glenbow Museum.

Kaska bead designs

The Kaska stretch from the central Yukon down into northern British Columbia and the bead styles differ clearly at each end. Based on the more recent Kaska beading I have seen I feel that the Ross River and Upper Laird/Watson Lake area Kaska created mostly, but not always, beadwork that was very close to the Northern Tutchone style. The Northern Tutchone and Kaska people were living in the Ross River area at the beginning of the 20th century. Sometime later the Tutchone moved more permanently away to the Big and Little Salmon River areas. The style changes further south into northern British Columbia where the Kaska bead styles show more influence from the Sekani and maybe the Slave people. Below in figure # 126 is a pair of mitts that belongs to Kaska Elder Mida Donnessey from the village of Upper Laird in the southern Yukon. Donnessey stated that the mitts were very old but did not know when they were made. She did say (in 2002) that they were at least sixty years old, maybe older. It would have meant that the mitts were made at the latest in the 1940s. When you examine the floral design at the top of the gloves you can see that they follow the upper Yukon River style. There is a central main four pedal flower that has stem work coming out of the bottom. The stems have a series of outcrops on them and leaf motifs. This is quite typical of the upper Yukon bead designs. The bottom part has a five pedal main flower on the glove on the left and a four pedal main flower on the right. There was a beaded design going around the flowers but most of the beads are missing. These may have been stem motifs.

Figure # 126 Kaska beaded mitts,1940s or before. Mida Donnessey collection.

When I examined other Kaska bead work in Northern British Columbia I noted a minor style change. On the following bag the bead work is slightly different. It was collected by James Teit in 1915 from the Dease Lake-Telegraph Creek area. Teit had spent three months of 1915 in the Dease Lake-Telegraph Creek area researching the Tahltan and Kaska people. The north end of Dease Lake, Porter Landing, was a Kaska village at that time while the south end of Dease Lake and Telegraph Creek are within the Tahltan traditional territory. The museum notes state that this bag may not be Kaska but traded in to the Kaska. To me it appears more Kaska than the following bag that is listed as Kaska. See the two photographs in figure # 127 for the Kaska bag that may have been traded in and see the two photographs in figure # 128 for a bag listed as Kaska but appears Tahltan to me.

Figure # 127. Kaska bag and detail. 1915, VI-H-32 CMC.

On the flap of the bag in figure # 127 is a series of three and four pedal flower/leaf motifs connected by stem work that appears to be quite disorganized. This is in contrast to the organized four pedal flower motifs that are uniformly spaced along the stem that is placed on the strap. The bead work on the strap is typical upper Yukon style while the beading on the bag's flap is not. This may be consistent with the Gestalt Theory: the beader of this bag may have seen the upper Yukon River bead designs and remembered the easier stem-four pedal flower pattern, but did not remember exactly the more complex design that was used on the bag's flap. It could be argued that the bead designs were copied from the upper Yukon River style but with the flap flower/leaf and stem work mixed up in accordance with the Gestalt Theory. Or the design on the flap was seen from another neighbouring group and the two different beading styles were added to the one bag. Because the Kaska's bead designs are influenced by the various neighbouring groups I would agree that this bag is Kaska.

Figure # 128. Kaska bag and detail. 1915, VI-H-8 CMC.

The bag in figure # 128 was also collected by Teit around the same time and place. If this bag is indeed Kaska then it is a copy of the Tahltan style, using the same broad geometric patterns. Because of the scarcity of other Kaska geometric beaded designs it could be argued that this bag was traded to the Kaska from the Tahltan. When you see the examples of Tahltan bead work later in this chapter you will notice the bold geometric bead style that is unique to the Tahltan.

See figure # 129 for an example of a Kaska moccasin. The short tongue beaded area was common in the southern Yukon and northern British Columbia. These were also collected at the same time by Teit. The bead design on the moccasin consists of a central flower at the end of a stem with leaves coming off the stem as well as from behind the main flower. This floral design may be a copy of a basic flower from nature, or a design that the

beader had seen in a catalogue or book. It could further be a combination of a more northern Kaska bead style with styles of other groups.

Figure # 129. Kaska moccasins. 1915. VI-H-4a,b CMC

From this brief survey of Kaska work I could not identify a definite Kaska beading style. All the examples I have shown are from the early twentieth century and there are very little Kaska artifacts collected before that time. The most I can say is that the Yukon Kaska worked in a modified upper Yukon River style.

Mountain Dene style

As I have mentioned earlier the Mountain Dene are not a formally recognized First Nations group of people in the Yukon. In fact most Yukoners have no idea that there are many Mountain Dene families living in the Yukon! The Mountain Dene lived in the area roughly between the Mackenzie River and the Mackenzie Mountains which borders the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Many of the people used to move back and forth across the now political border but in the early twentieth century many families settled on the Yukon side of the border. This may have had something to do with the 1921 and 1922 signing of Treaty 11 in which the First Nations people of the Northwest Territories ceded their territory for payment and protection of hunting rights. People outside the treaty could not collect treaty payments. Perhaps this made a number of the Mountain Dene return permanently to the Northwest Territories and no longer travel to the Yukon. But some did permanently settle on the Yukon side of the border at Keele Mountain. I learned from Kathlene Suza, a Mountain Dene woman living in Ross River, that sometime before the building of the Canol Road by the United States Army in 1942-1944 the Mountain Dene left Keele Mountain and settled in Sheldon Lake. In the 1950s families of Mountain Dene moved on to settle in other Yukon communities. Some families moved from Sheldon Lake in 1952 to Ross River. Other families travelled down the MacMillan River and settled in Pelly Crossing and yet other families travelled down the Hess River to settle at first in Lansing and then later in Mayo. (Suza, personal communication, 2011)

There has been no effort to collect Yukon Mountain Dene artifacts. Fortunately, some artifacts have shown up. In the Canadian Museum of Civilization there is a set of Mackenzie River styled decorated dog saddle packs that were found in an abandoned cabin upstream from Kalzas River in 1965. This is in the heart of Northern Tutchone territory about half way between Pelly Crossing and Mayo. Obviously this Mackenzie River beading style did not

belong anywhere near the area it was found. But as mentioned above, the Mountain Dene settled in the area and brought their Mackenzie River beading style with them. Because the dog saddle packs were found in Northern Tutchone territory they are listed as such. In fact, they are Yukon Mountain Dene saddle packs. See figure # 130 for photographs of the Mountain Dene dog blankets.

Figure # 130. Mountain Dene dog blankets. VI-Q-53, CMC

There is a photograph from Yukon Archives of a dog blanket in use. See figure # 131 of a dog wearing a blanket in Dawson City. There is no further information but the beading style looks very much like the dog blankets in figure # 130.

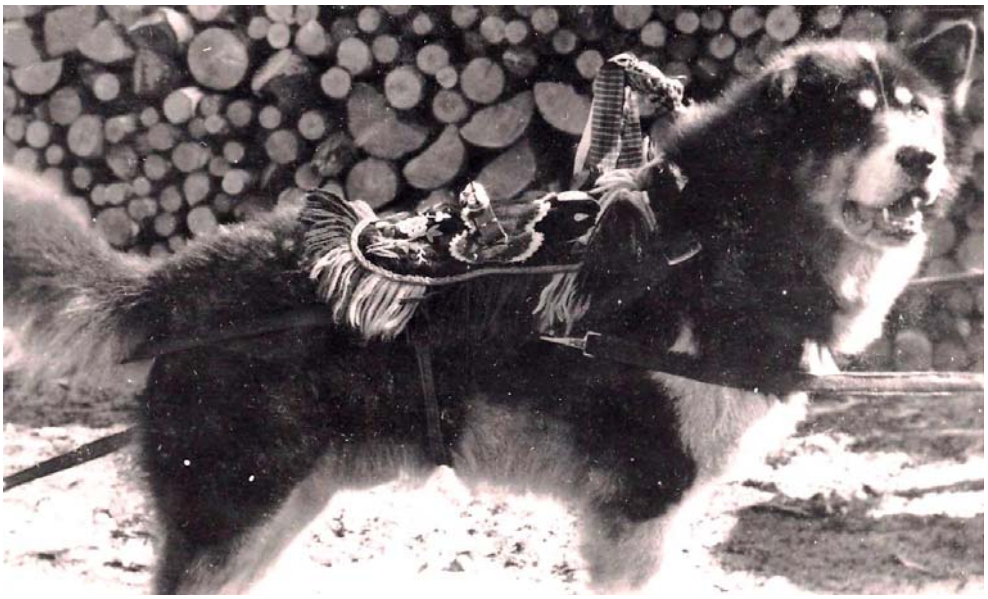


Figure # 131. Beaded dog blanket. Photograph from Dawson City. 995.345.1.75, DCM&HS.

On an added note about dog blankets in Ross River, Ted Charlie, a Kaska man from Ross River, told me that he remembers seeing dog team blankets and they were a source of pride for the owners of the team and the makers of the blankets. They were quite common until the social upheaval that occurred in Ross River with the opening of the Faro mining operations in 1965. After this point, Ross River people began selling many of their cultural treasures to obtain money. This continued until there were pretty well no more items to sell. Those who did not sell their artifacts later lost them through various means. One of the last dog team blanket sets was lost when the shed they were being stored in burnt down.

There are active Mountain Dene artists, for example Elder Amos Dick in Ross River, who still carve. Artwork created by any member of at least the Dick, Suza and Joe families from Ross River, Pelly Crossing and Mayo should be considered Yukon Mountain Dene art.

Southern Tutchone bead styles

While the Southern Tutchone beading style has all the ingredients of the upper Yukon River beading style there is a move toward simplicity. The changes in style from the Northern Tutchone beading style are greater with the Southern Tutchone than with the northern Kaska people. That is why I discussed the Kaska style after the Northern Tutchone. The Southern Tutchone flowers and leaves are connected by stem work but there is notably less stem work which often lacks the 'grouse tracks'. The flowers and leaves are not as detailed as the upper Yukon River Northern Tutchone and Han beading styles. The reason can possibly be found again in the Gestalt Theory and the close connections with the Tlingit beading styles. The Tlingit beading style uses less stem work and simpler flower and leaf designs. In fact, the Tlingit's use of flowers is limited when compared to the rest of the Yukon, as you will see later in this section.

In figure # 132 is a Southern Tutchone cartridge belt. All the female Elders I showed this image to state that they had seen or made these belts and some were still making them. The strap is worn around the neck and the buckle is worn in the back. The flap in the front is to protect the cartridges. The wearer lifts the flap to retrieve the shells.

This cartridge belt is in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection and was collected by D.D. Cairnes in 1911 at the Taylor and Drury store in Whitehorse. The belt is reported to be made in Hootalinqua, approximately 80 kilometers north of Whitehorse. Hootalinqua is in the northern part of Southern Tutchone territory bordering Northern Tutchone lands. The floral designs on this belt look a bit like the Tagish designs. There are some leaf petals that are solid but most have a negative space in the center of the leaf. The stem work is simple and connects the various beaded motifs.

Figure # 132, Southern Tutchone rifle cartridge belt from Hootalinqua. VI-Q-7, CMC.

Next are two examples of bead work that are done in the Southern Tutchone style but were made by the coastal Tlingit lady, Mrs. Jim Boss. The octopus bag on the left is more in the Southern Tutchone style with some use of stem work. The various flower and leaf motifs have split colours which is not so common for the coastal Tlingits. The octopus bag on the right has a Tlingit flavor by using more scroll type floral motifs. All the scroll type motifs are beaded solid without the common negative space that the Tlingits use. Mrs. Jim Boss was originally from the Coast. Mrs. Marge Jackson said that Mrs. Jim Boss was from Juneau and married Jim Boss from Lake Lebarge. Did she already work in this style or did she adopt the Southern Tutchone beading style? Note that both have the same design in a prominent location on the bags. The octopus bags in figure # 133 have a large central motif beaded at the central top. While most octopus bags have a central motif this one appears as a figure of some sort with a head, arms, wings and legs. When I inquired with Elders about it they did not know what it was. See my drawing of the figure in # 134.

Figure # 133, Mrs. Jim Boss octopus bag. 72.1.65, MacBride Museum

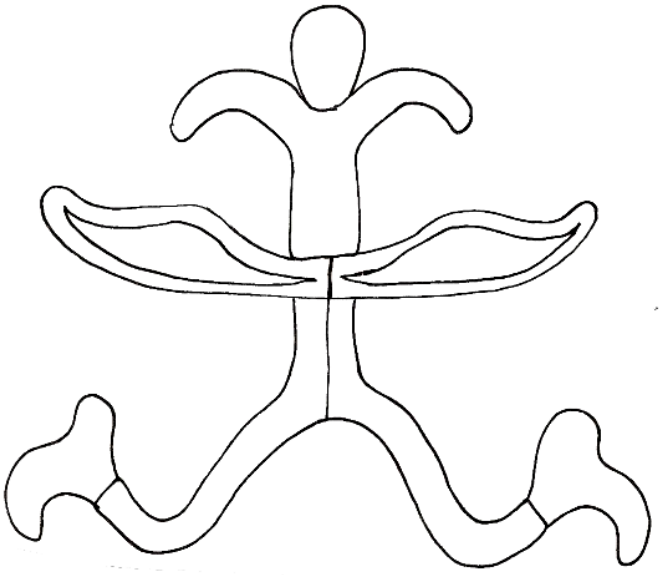


Figure # 134, Mrs. Jim Boss' central motif on her octopus bags. UvK drawing.

The museum notes state that the Southern Tutchone women made these bags to trade to the Tlingits as they were in high demand on the coast. In the photographs taken around Whitehorse of First Nations dances and events in the 1940s there are many examples of octopus bags. The octopus bags themselves seemed to have been adopted about the same time or shortly after floral bead designs were adopted. Octopus bags are said to have developed from First Nations people from the eastern part of North America using animal furs that still had the legs on. They eventually evolved into the present bags. In Barbara Hail and Kate Duncan's *Out of the North*, they describe the movement of the octopus bag from eastern Canada-United States to the west coast. They state that the coastal Tlingits first started making octopus bags in the 1870s and were very common by the 1890s. The writers also mention that the octopus bags were never popular with the Athapaskans. While overall this may be true, it is not the case for the southern Yukon. While I cannot say when the first octopus bags were made in the southern Yukon there is enough evidence to show they were in common use in the early twentieth century. See the photographs in figures # 326 on page 311 and # 333 on page 318 for other examples of Octopus bags. Octopus bags were also called dance aprons which were used for dance while others were used as fire bags. In the photographs listed above you can see them used in dances.

In figure # 135 is a pair of mitts from the Kluane Museum of Natural History in Burwash which is Southern Tutchone territory but the bead work is closer to the Northern Tutchone style. There is no information on these mitts other than that they are part of the museum's collection and are old. As you can see in the design, the motifs are small simple flowers or leaf designs at the end of the stems. The stems have small beaded outcrops coming out along the shaft. On the side of the mitt is a bigger star-like motif with a series of stems coming out of the corners.

Figure # 135, Southern Tutchone mitts. 982.15A, KMNH.

There are many other mitts in the Kluane Museum of Natural History. See another example in figure # 136.

Figure # 136, Southern Tutchone mitts. KMNH.

This pair has even more an upper Yukon appearance. Since the Burwash Southern Tutchone are the westernmost Yukon group and north of all the Southern Tutchone, they were further away from Tlingit influences. They had contacts with the Northern Tutchone and Tanana and maybe those groups had more influence on the Burwash Southern Tutchone than the further south Southern Tutchone, who had more influence from the Tlingit. The bead design on the mitts uses a lot of stem work to cover the hand area of the mitt which is different than the Gwich'in style that uses very little stem work. The top part of the mitt has a central flower and stems coming off it with secondary flower and leaf motifs.

As you can see there was a difference from the northwestern Southern Tutchone who were away from the Yukon River and the main Tlingit trading routes and the south and eastern Southern Tutchone who had more contact with the Tlingits via the trading routes. The Tlingit influence is seen most with the Tagish people who had the strongest ties with the Tlingits.

Tagish bead designs

The Tagish bead designs are a cross between the Southern Tutchone and the Inland Tlingit bead styles. The resemblance to the two groups most likely comes from trading middlemen between the Coastal Tlingits and interior First Nations people. The Tagish will often make the floral designs solid or they will add additional designs within the leaf or petal. In figure # 137 we can see two different pairs of moccasins from the Tagish people. Both are in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection. The example on the left was collected by D.D. Cairnes from Lake Bennett in the summer of 1911. The pair on the left appears to be a stylized design, not looking like a flower at all. This is more of a Tlingit trait. The design is beaded on a black background. The floral design is solid, yet there are color changes which you would expect in an Inland Tlingit design. The next pair is listed as Inland Tlingit but was collected from Carcross during the same summer as the previous pair. This pair of moccasins was made by Annie, the wife of a Chief at Taku Arm. She later lived in Carcross. The Museum information card states that Annie was the mother of Dawson Charlie. In Cruikshank's *Reading Voice's* on page 130 there is a family tree and it shows Annie listed as Kooyáy, a Tagish woman. So this is the case of a Tagish woman married to a Tlingit man. Based on that, these are Tagish moccasins.

Figure # 137. Left; Tagish moccasins. VI-P-2ab. Right; Tagish moccasins made by Annie (Kooyáy). VI-J-2ab. Both CMC.

Annie's design appears to be a stylized flower with stem and leaf motifs coming off the stem on a green background. Annie has added a row of various colored beads to line the inside of the floral designs. Also, the color changes do not all happen at the point of a direction change but flow around with the design. There is a color change on the stem between the lower leaf design and the upper flower design. The information states: "Dr. Cairnes claims that the star design on this specimen is peculiar to the Crow "Tribe." Cairnes is referring to the Crow moiety or clan of the Tagish people. There are other examples of variations of this type of floral 'star' design on other Tagish and Southern Tutchone works. To conclude, the left moccasin appears to be more Tlingit while the right pair of moccasins appears to be a combination of Tlingit and Southern Tutchone beading styles.

Another example of Tagish bead work can be seen in figure # 138. This is a wall pocket made by Mrs. Tagish Jim. Many wall pockets, octopus bags and bag flaps have a central floral motif where the beaded stems radiate from. Other items, such as dance shirts, sometimes have this same format.

Figure # 138. Wall pocket made by Ms. Tagish Jim. 72.1.65a, MacBride Museum.

In each panel the central motif and the series of floral designs are at the end of the stems. In the top panel (which is not a pocket and does not open) there is a flower where the petals curl back into themselves. In the center panel there is a unique floral design that has a series of waves with a spade-like motif in its center. The waves look like the wave-like shapes on Annie's moccasins in figure # 137. The bottom panel has stars in the upper corner. Note the solid flowers, leaves and color splitting which was often used by the Tutchone. There is no use of outcrops from the stem work. While the Southern Tutchone sometimes included outcrops on the stems it appears that the Tagish never did.

In the next example in figure # 139 is details of the Tagish hide pull overcoat from figure # 82B in the previous chapter on page 113.

Figure # 139. Details of Tagish beadwork on hide jacket. VI-P-19, CMC.

The beadwork on the jacket is more Southern Tutchone in nature. The main structure of the bead design in both examples is the stem work. On the right is a panel below the neck of the coat that has a series of double stem works running the length of the panel. The leaf motifs have split colours with an inside negative space. The back view shows a small central flower with stem works coming out of each side and spreading outwards. There are a series of leaf and flower motifs along the stems. The outside five pedal flowers are slightly larger than the central flower. I think that the overall stem design is the important focus as opposed to the central flower, which is almost not noticeable.

A last Tagish bead work example is an octopus bag. This octopus bag was collected by D.D. Cairnes from the Taku Arm of Tagish Lake in the summer of 1911. See figure # 140. This bag was made by Annie of the Crow Moiety of the Tagish people which very well may be the same Annie that made the moccasins I discussed in figure # 137. It is described as a beaded fire bag and is different from the others by having a faded red flannelette that appears tan coloured. The museum artifact catalogue card states:

> Cairnes' notes read: "Big wall pocket made by Annie. Design supposed to be peculiar to Crow "tribe". "Crow" Indians supposed to have come originally from head of Taku River and Taku Inlet better referred to as Taku Arm of Tagish Lake".

The notes carry on with this piece of interesting information:

> This fire bag or wall pocket in form has a strong resemblance to Ojibwa fire bags. The style may not be indigenous but effected by examples seen carried and used by traders. Note: above description taken from notes by H. Burnham of the Royal Ontario Museum.

H. Burnham may be correct, but there are many photographs of coastal Tlingits wearing octopus bags from the late 1800s, well before this bag was collected. What makes this bag different and what may have made H. Burnham think that the style is not indigenous, is the bead design. The top of the octopus bag has a similar star type pattern as on Annie's moccasins in figure # 137, but the rest of the beadwork is quite unique. It does not seem to be in line with either the Tutchone or Tlingit bead designs. It appears to be more Tahltan. As you will see later in this section the Tahltan used large bold geometric designs, much like the octopus bag made by Annie. There are many historical links between the Tahltan and the Tagish. Some of the Tagish people were Tahltan who moved from the Telegraph Creek area into the Tagish traditional territory a long time ago. Also, the Tagish and Tahltan languages are very close. Maybe H. Burnham is correct but I am inclined to think that she may have been influenced by seeing or working with the Tahltan. This octopus bag has five legs instead of the traditional four.

Figure # 140. Annie's octopus bag, from Tagish Lake. VI-P-3, CMC.

The Tagish beading style appears to be a combination of the Southern Tutchone and Tlingit bead styles. Sometimes, the beader favors one style over the other. Other times, as we see from the octopus bag above, she creates a unique design. At this point I move on to the Inland Tlingit beading style.

Inland Tlingit bead designs

During the Geometric Period the Inland Tlingit created a totally different visual imagery from the Tlingits on the coast but in the Floral Period there is a strong connection of both beading styles. The Tlingit foliate beading style originated on the coast and moved to the interior to the Inland Tlingit because of the strong links they had with coastal Tlingits. Unlike the requirement of large cider and very skilled artists to create other coastal Tlingit art, which the Inland Tlingit did not have, every Inland Tlingit woman had the materials and skills to create the coastal Tlingit beading style. Kate Duncan in her *Northern Athapaskan Art* explains the origins of the coastal Tlingit beading style:

> The developed foliate scroll motif that appears in Tlingit beadwork in the 1880s is unmistakably visually similar to cartouche floral forms that became popular on Northwest Coast engraved silver bracelets slightly earlier. Such forms have no evolutionary roots in the established two-dimensional formline system of the coast. On brackets, cartouche foliate forms appear alone or with an eagle, in a combination familiar on bank notes and letter heads of the period. A standard Victorian motif, cartouche-type foliage was also common in any number of other places at that time-on furniture, sewing machines, china, and product labels, to name a few. (Duncan 1989: 177)

Duncan goes on to explain the reasons for the Tlingits to adopt the scroll-like motifs as their main beading style:

> The attitudes of the Tlingit people towards the neighboring Athapaskans suggest an explanation for the sudden appearance of a Tlingit foliate style. Despite their ties through trade, the Tlingit considered the Athapaskans inferior. But they admired their bead work. The Tlingit woman who wanted to produce floral beadwork but within a tradition culturally her own had available in the bracelet designs a floral style both unlike Athapaskan work and already established (albeit briefly) in her culture. In developing a beaded version, she could produce foliate work that was clearly Tlingit. (Duncan 1989: 177)

While I agree with Duncan that the Tlingits adopted their beading style from the scroll foliate they saw, I do not agree that they purposely decided not to copy the Athapaskan bead styles because they felt superior to the Athapaskans. The Tlingits had no problems in trading in Athapaskan hide clothing, bone tools and shaman pendants which they valued highly. They even adopted the geometric motifs they saw in the tunic breastbands into their baskets. Even today when I am visiting Alaska and meet Tlingits they are always proud of their links with the interior, telling me of their connections with us. Given the time line of the introduction of floral designs into the upper Yukon River region from Fort Yukon, starting at the earliest in the late 1860s, it would only give twenty years for the beading tradition to reach the Southern Tutchone and Tagish people by the 1880s. With the coastal Tlingit style starting in the 1880s, there would have been more access to the already established bracelet floral designs. Because of the availability of the scroll foliate motifs it would have been the most available to copy. I also have to mention that the coastal Tlingits adopted some of the interior floral design at the same time. While not the main floral style, some beaders did produce work that appears to have had links to the upper Yukon River floral style. When you examine older photographs of Tlingit gatherings there are sometimes examples of upper

Yukon River style beaded designs. See figure #141 and # 142 for some examples of floral type bead designs on Tlingit clothing.

Figure # 141. Last Potlatch, Sitka circa 1894. ASL-P93-51.

The title of this photograph is "Last Potlatch" and was taken in Sitka about 1894. Take note of the man standing at the left of the photograph who is wearing a beaded dance shirt. The "V" breastband is reminiscent of the earlier hide tunics traded from the interior. Along the breastband and around the bottom is a floral type of beadwork. You can see along the bottom a large multi-pedaled flower motif. There is stem work leading off that flower to leaf motifs. Along the breastband is a series of leaf motifs that are connected by a stem. These are the two most common places beads were applied to dance shirts. Beside him is a man sitting and has what appears to be a Hudson Bay blanket wrapped around him. In quite a few potlatch photographs there is a man wearing some type of blanket wrapped around him. See figures # 326 on page 311, # 333 on page 318 and # 427 on page 392 for other examples of blanket use. The fourth man from the left also appears to be wearing a dance shirt with a deep "V", much like the earlier mentioned dance shirt. The man on the right is holding a ceremonial dance paddle. He has a bird on his dance shirt and flower bead designs at the bottom. I also want to point out that he is wearing the interior style hide trousers. I can see two button blankets in the photograph.

Figure # 142. Cow-Dik-Ney and Cluch. 1906. ASL-P226-054.

In the above photograph are Cow-Dik-Ney and Cluch in a portrait studio. The photograph is copyrighted for 1906. Cow-Dik-Ney is wearing what appears to be a hide dance shirt with a geometric breastband pattern that often appears on Tlingit, Inland Tlingit and sometimes Tutchone breastbands. See figures # 68 on page 101 and # 70 on page 102 for other examples of the breast band pattern. The bottom of the tunic has floral bead designs that have an appearance of scroll foliate but I can also see flowers and stem work. The bead work appears to be a combination of an interior and scroll type design. Note that the tunic that Cow-Dik-Ney is wearing has a straight bottom and not pointed like most other hide tunics. I would guess that this tunic is a cross between the older hide tunics and newer dance shirts. The dance shirt that Cluch is wearing is made of fabric and has large 8-pedal flowers with stem works that connect a series of scroll type leaf motifs.

These are just some examples of the coastal Tlingits using flowers and stem work in their beaded designs. This makes me suggest that there was some interior influence in the bead design since the silver bracelet scroll work had a lack of flowers and stem work.

When we examine the Tlingit scroll type of bead work you will find that the scroll leaf motif would have two or three rows of beads to create the leaf pattern. It is less common to have more than three rows. Tlingit bead work also often had a color change at the junction points of major directional changes, i.e. the bead pattern line is now pointed in a different direction. Once in a while there is an additional color used to line the inside of the pattern. You can see this clearly in the following bead work on a small octopus bag in figure # 143. This octopus bag is from the Canadian Museum of Civilization and is listed as Inland Tlingit. The artifact was collected from a dealer, D.C. Ewing, in 1975.

Figure # 143 Inland Tlingit bag. VI-J-98. CMC

The next example is beadwork on an Inland Tlingit gun case that is also in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection. See figure # 144. This gun case was collected by Clement Lewis at Teslin Lake and arrived at the museum in 1912. Note in these examples that there is a color change at the joints, but mostly one color throughout the individual leaf design. At the opening of the gun case are additional silver beads on the top facing part of the blue. In the design at the tip of the gun case are two petals that are solid. The row widths in these designs vary from two to three.

Figure # 144, floral designs on Inland Tlingit gun case. VI-J-31, CMC.

See figure # 69 on page 102 in the previous chapter for another example of this Inland Tlingit beading style.

The next examples of Inland Tlingit bead designs are made of solid bead work in bold geometric patterns. This style does not seem to have been adopted by the Southern Tutchone, Tagish or coastal Tlingits. I think there are possibly two reasons for the solid beaded style. One is the influence from the geometric spruce root basket designs of the Inland Tlingit and the bold geometric breastband patterns in the tunics. The other is the influence from the geometric Tahltan styles. The Tahltan did have villages on Teslin Lake and reportedly as far north as the basin of the Big Salmon River, possibly even further. In *My Old People Say* Teslin Village and Johnson Crossings are listed as possible early Tahltan villages. Even though there were many raids and wars against each other, there would also have been trade and intermarriage and the exchange of slaves to keep the peace. After all, the Tlingits also often had raids amongst themselves; between different clans and houses. They would later resolve their issues and start trading amongst themselves again. The interaction between the Tlingits and Tahltan may have resulted in the Inland Tlingit picking up and adopting some of the Tahltan beading styles that covered all or most of the area that was to be beaded. Other times the Tahltan did leave negative spaces of coloured cloth but they were part of the overall bold geometric design. This style of Tahltan beading uses many curvy, geometric shapes and the Inland Tlingit solid beading style tends to be sharper edged. The other area in the Yukon that employs the fully beaded style is the Gwich'in in the far north but the distance is too great to have been an influence.

In figure # 145 is a pair of moccasins that was collected by Clement Lewis at Teslin Lake and arrived at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in 1912. They have a geometric design and are somewhat like the repeating-cone motif I mentioned earlier when I discussed geometric motifs.

Figure # 145, geometric beaded motif on Inland Tlingit moccasins. VI-J-3 a-b, CMC.

The next solid beaded geometric example is a tent wall pocket in figure # 146. This wall pocket was collected at the same time and place as the moccasins above. This wall pocket has a series of geometric vertical bands filled with chevrons, zigzags and triangles. There is an eye attached at the top to hang the pocket.

Figure # 146, geometric beaded motif on Inland Tlingit wall pocket. VI-J-18, CMC.

As in other cases, the Inland Tlingit bead style was influenced by the neighbours. The Inland Tlingit have three main beading styles, the scroll foliate style from the coast, the geometric style possibly from their own culture and other interior people and a floral style that has roots in the upper Yukon River area. While here I did not show any Inland Tlingit examples with influence from the upper Yukon River, you can see the style on Inland Tlingit Jim Fox's jacket in figure # 89 on page 119. Another example is on the dance shirt of the man standing to the left at the bottom in figure # 101 on page 129. I will also point out various beading styles in potlatch photographs that will be shown in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death.

Tahltan bead designs

The Tahltan have a unique beading style that is not done elsewhere in at least northwestern North America. It is a strong bold style and is quickly recognizable. Why do the Tahltan have such an unequalled beading style? They did make a small amount of floral designs but these were over-shadowed by the geometric designs. As a starting point I will refer to what Kate Duncan in *Northern Athapaskan Art* writes:

> As in other western regions, there is several design types, with two used together on about a third of the examples. A preference for nonrepresentational forms-for geometric or curvilinear-abstract shapes-is unique to Tahltan work. (Duncan 1989: 163)

And:

> There is a clear relationship between many of the motifs on classic Tahltan firebags and knife sheaths and those on Tlingit spruce root baskets from the same period (fig. 9.7). Although both Emmons and Teit were very familiar with the material culture from both coastal and interior British Columbia, neither mentions these ties in his writing. (see, however, information from Teit's field notes in fig.9.6) Emmons (1911:48-49) states that the Tahltan do not make baskets themselves, but that they own Tlingit spruce root ones. (Duncan 1989: 163)

Duncan builds a good case about the relationship of the Tlingit baskets and Tahltan geometric bead designs. The only point I would add is that the Tahltan were mostly away from the areas of bead-working traditions, such as the upper Yukon and Laird River systems. When beads arrived in their area, they, like the other Athapaskans, simply replaced the porcupine quills with beads in order to make the geometric breastband patterns. While Duncan states that the Tahltan learned the porcupine embroidery from the Kaska based on Teit's research, it cannot be said with certainty how long ago that occurred. For example, there are still Tlingit Elders on the coast who say that their basket and Raven's tail weaving designs come from the interior. These porcupine embroidered breastbands were firmly established before beads arrived in the area. Maybe the tradition of creating geometric motifs on clothing carried on after the arrival of beads. Duncan states that most Tahltan motifs are unique, so they are not direct copies from anywhere else. In this case the motifs of the Tlingit baskets only would have provided additional inspirations to an already artistic establishment. As for the lesser floral bead designs the Tahltan created, Duncan writes:

> When stylized floral motifs occur on Tahltan beadwork, they play a minor role in the design as a whole and tend to be very simple (for example an almond-shaped leaf). It is significant that most of the stylized floral examples collected from the Tahltan come from Cassiar, the Tahltan post closest to the Yukon-Tanana region where stylized motifs dominate. (Duncan 1989: 163)

On an added note of interest Duncan writes about the floral bead work:

> Tahltan collections include a large body of beadwork that may be termed "classic-Tahltan," a small group of pieces in a floral style that appears to be instrumental in the development of the Tlingit-Inland Tlingit beadwork style (see chapter 10), and some beaded items that are stylistically Tlingit and were probably traded from the coast. (Duncan 1989: 161)

I will next examine some examples of the Tahltan beading style. The first is a shot pouch in figure # 147 that was collected by James Teit in 1912.

Figure # 147, Tahltan geometric beaded shot bag. 1912. VI-O-3 CMC.

This bag (which is also examined in *Northern Athapaskan Art* on page 162) has an almost fully beaded front on hide with a zigzag pattern at the bottom and a repeating diamond motif on top. The Tahltan bags are often separated into sections, in this case three with the hide showing at the bottom. The strap is undecorated. The only notable comment I will make is that this bag uses more white in its design than most other Tahltan bags. When you see the next shot bag in figure # 148, also collected by Teit but in 1915, you will notice more use of red.

Figure # 148, Tahltan geometric beaded shot bag. 1915. VI-O-2 CMC.

This bag (likewise in *Northern Athapaskan Art* on page 162) has also three sections with the hide showing on the bottom. While the Tahltan mostly applied the geometric designs to shot and octopus bags as well as to knife sheaths, they often applied the floral designs to

belts, straps and octopus bags. Note the curved geometric patterns that are unique to the Tahltan. Below in figure # 149 is a cartridge belt. This belt was collected by George Emmons in 1906 from the Upper Stikine River, which is Tahltan territory. The two straps coming off the belt have come apart. They would be joined and go around the neck. At the base of the straps is a cover on the area where the cartridges are stored and protected. This belt still had two live cartridges in the bullets holders!

Figure # 149, Tahltan geometric beaded on cartridge belt. 1906. 42, Burke Museum.

The bead work on this belt is an example of a more floral/geometric style created by the Tahltan. On the strap the geometric motifs are connected by a stem. Along the belt are curved geometric patterns and some stem work. There is a three pedal floral motif as part of the design. All the beading is on red cloth as is much of the Tahltan work.
The isolation of the Tahltan up the Stikine River resulted in a unique style of beading from the whole region. It stands out by its boldness and cannot be confused with any other beading style in northwestern North America.

Closing comments

The spread of bead work in the Yukon started in Fort McPherson in the 1840s with the Mackenzie River style and then spread to the west to Fort Yukon by the 1860s. As it spread west the style became slightly simpler. A major change in beading styles occurred at Fort Yukon. This beading style change, a much simpler version, spread up the Yukon River (and Tanana River) until reaching the Lake Lebarge areas close to the headwaters of the Yukon River by the 1880s. At about that time there were two other styles emerging, the Tlingit style spreading inland along the Taku River and the unique Tahltan style in the upper Stikine River area. During this whole process the styles blended slightly from group to group. Many of the groups beaded in a couple of different styles depending on the influences of the neighbouring groups. Marriages and trading between groups was the force that resulted in adopting new patterns and styles.

The Beaded Period style was to last until World War Two at which time the Alaska Highway was built and an increase of the tourist trade took place. This resulted in the reduction of the unique group styles and a blending of almost all south-central Yukon beading styles. There was also a simplification of bead work as now works were made for the tourist trade instead of family. I will discuss these events more in Chapter Eleven-Trade Art & Current Period.

Chapter Five-Figurative Art

Introduction

In this chapter I examine various figurative forms that were created by early Yukon and neighbouring First Nations people. Over the years I have heard from various people that are in positions of some cultural authority that Yukon First Nations people did not have a figurative art tradition. A recent example involved an archeology student who I briefly met while examining artifacts that were stored in the Yukon Governments Archeology storage facility in Whitehorse in 2010. The student informed me that Yukon First Nations people did not have a figurative art tradition. The student was only passing on to me what he had learned. An example of what is taught about early Yukon First Nations art can be read in the Handbook of the American Indian, Volume 6 Subarctic:

> In spite of their proximity to the great art style of the Northwest Coast peoples, even the Cordillerans closest to the coast could not copy the coastal peoples' monumental cedar carving or painted house screens. They lack the straight-grained coastal timber, and their mobile way of life militated against the creation of large or fixed heirloom objects. Their own artistic expression was in square geometric black or red painted designs or incisions on wooden or antler plates, spoons or gambling sticks and tasteful decorations of clothing. Psychologically, they apparently preferred not to fix in realistic representative form the frequently metamorphosing beings of a universe that they conceptualized as fluid and open. (Helm 1981: 386)

Reading in what some people consider the bible of authority on North Americans Indians, people from the Cordilleran did not create realistic art. Cordilleran is the name of the passage through the glaciers that lead from Alaska into northwestern Alberta. This was formed during the end of the Wisconsin Glacial period about 15,000 years ago. The text is referring to those Native Americans that traditionally lived in that area, amongst them Yukon First Nations people.

Later that afternoon the Yukon Government's archeologist, Mr. Greg Hare asked me if there was indeed a Yukon First Nations figurative tradition, since as far as he knew, there was not one. As you will see in this chapter, I will show that there was a Yukon First Nations figurative arts tradition. While not a main Yukon First Nations artistic expression, there are enough examples of figurative work to support this view.

In the first section I will examine Athapaskan figurative images that are at first not recognized as human renderings. These examples are mostly pendants and the dot within a circle motif. From there I will move on to Athapaskan and Inland Tlingit figurative art that is easier recognizable as human and animal. These figurative images generally fall into one of three styles; stick figures, outlined figures and silhouette images, all three painted on drums or engraved on bone or antler tools. In some cases there was a blending of the styles. See figure # 150 for my drawings of examples of simple stick figure, outlined figure and silhouette figurative images.

Figure # 150, Examples of figurative images of the Athapaskan style. UvK Drawing.

Almost all Athapaskan figurative images, that is, humans as well as the animals of the land, air and water, were painted or engraved in one of these three basic styles. When we look at the figurative art of the Inland Tlingit you will see a figurative art form that is more complex than the examples illustrated above.

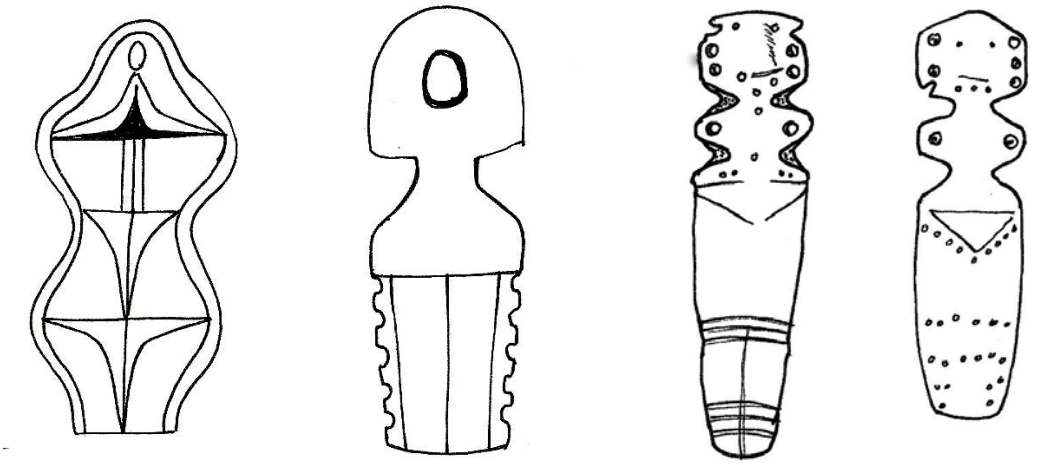
From the stick figures, outlined figures and silhouette images I will move on to carved figures and faces. I will further examine various beaded figurative images. Masks will be analysed later in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch& Death. I will offer what details I have learned about the images and in some cases give suggestions about the meaning. There are times when I will include images from one section, such as beaded figurative images, into another section, like carving. I do this so as not to break up a train of thought and to identify certain points.

Stylized human-figure pendants

There are a wide range of pendants with various degrees of engraving on them. Besides the engraving the pendants themselves are finished in various shapes. Some of the shamans' pendants may be stylized human forms. This is what Judy Thompson says about some of these pendants:

> The Athapaskan pendants, while relativity simple in both form and decoration, show considerable diversity in shape and incised motif. The most common shape is lanceolate, although other forms occur, including stylized human figures. (Glenbow Museum 1987: 142)

I will show two Athapaskan pendants as well as two figurines from parts of ancient Europe for comparison. In figure # 151 A & B are two Athapaskan pendants that were collected in the mid-1800s. On the right side, C & D, are two Bulgarian figurines. The Bulgarian figurines are about 10cm and were made between 6000 and 6500 years ago. I found the basic outline of the two different sets to be similar, which could support Thompson's statement that Athapaskans created pendants that are human figures. I want to point out to the reader that the Bulgarian examples are Paleolithic from the hunter-gather societies and that the Geometric Art Period of Yukon First Nations is also Paleolithic art, since Yukon First Nations people were hunter-gatherers into at least the late nineteenth century.



A B C D

Figure # 151. Comparison of Athapaskan pendants and Bulgarian figurines. A: JaVg-2:97, CMC. B: JaVg-2:101, CMC. UvK drawing; C & D after Linda Mount-Williams.

This is what Marija Gimbutas in *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe* says about the Bulgarian figurines:

> In the East Balkan civilization, particularly in the Gumelnita complex, schematized bone figurines with a pubic triangle, ear-ring holes, two dots or depressions on the back (*trigonum lumbale*) probably representing eggs, and arm stumps or 'perforated arm stumps' which are stylized renderings of folded arms, are found in both settlements and graves. (…) The supernatural triangle and the nudity do not reveal her sexuality. Breasts and belly are not stressed. Through the act of engraving an enormous triangle in the center of the sculpture the artist perhaps visualized the universal womb, the inexhaustible source of life, to which the dead man returns in order to be born again. In this sense the great Goddess is the magician-mother. (Gimbutas 1992: 158)

While some of the details on the Bulgarian figurines are different from the Athapaskan, there are also similarities. In example A is what appear to be a pubic triangle as well as some of the same curves that form the female body such as the wider hips. The dots are lacking in both A and B. Yukon First Nations believe in reincarnation as well as the importance of females in society. Yukon First Nations are matrilineal, the linage of the children are traced through the mother, since that is where they come from. There were also woman shamans. Women could have two husbands (as well as men having two or more wives) and generally women ran the affairs of camp life. There was a shared gender importance in Yukon First Nations society. If the above pendants A and B are human figures then maybe A represents the female and B represents the male. I suggest B as a male because of the lack of a pubic triangle and a straight line across with a line coming down the middle. Is this suggesting a pair of human legs? A is also more curvy than B giving it a more female rendering. See figures # 24 on the right on page 59 and # 202 on page 211 for additional examples of pendants.

Big Headed Star Man motif

While this motif does not look human and is not strictly considered figurative art, Catharine McClellan has identified the circle within a circle to be the Big Headed Star Man. This circle motif is repeated to make a pattern that is most often found on, but not limited to, sheep horn spoons. See figure # 152 below.

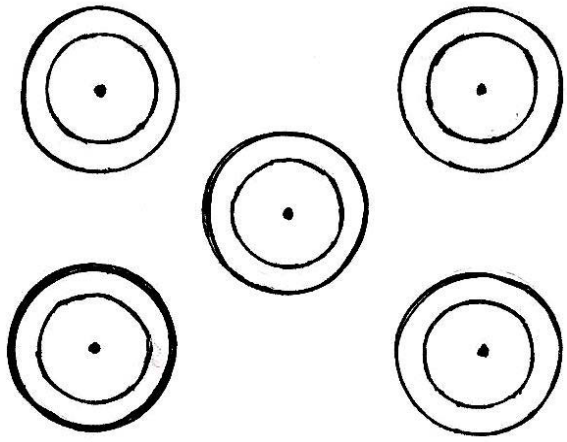


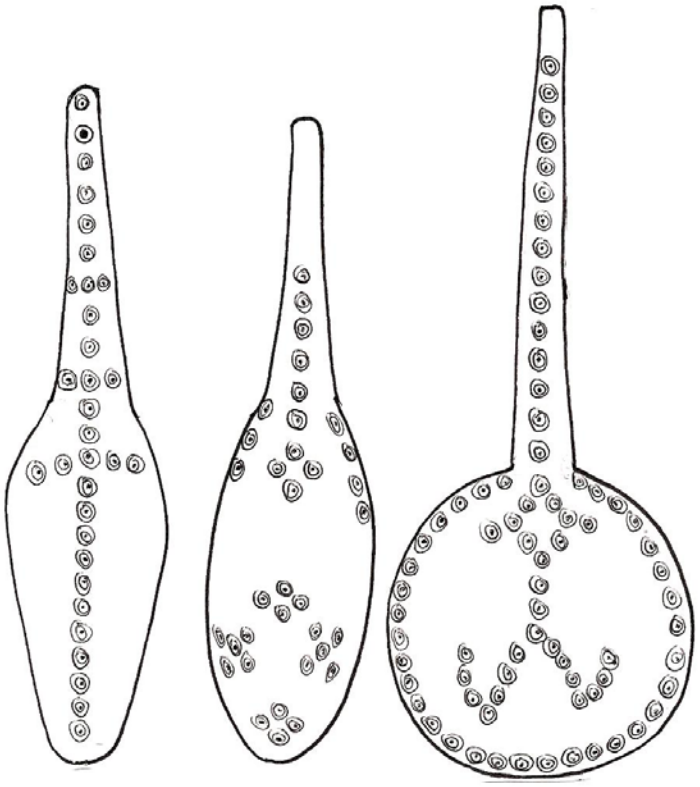
Figure # 152. The Big Headed Star Man motif. UvK Drawing.

The Elders I spoke to stated that the perfect circles of this motif were achieved by using various sized rifle cartridges. The smaller circle was made by using a .22 caliber cartridge and the larger circle by using a 30-30 cartridge. There are other circles that are less than perfect and these appear to have been made by using a hand carving tool. They may have been engraved by hand because of the unavailability of cartridges when they were made. This could be before cartridges arrived into the area by trade. The designs were also burned into the horn. Robert McKennan in *The Upper Tanana Indians* wrote:

> Spoons are also carved from the horn of mountain sheep, the horn being boiled first to make it soft. I saw small spoons, comparable to the wooden ones, and large ones suitable for use as dippers and ladles. The handles of the latter are tilted at much more of an angle due to the fact that in making the bowl the horn shell is turned inside out. One specimen was decorated around the rim and along the handle by a dot-and-circle design which was burned in. (McKennan 1959: 45)

The dot within a circle motif is arranged in different patterns and each pattern varied from spoon to spoon. These patterns were used throughout most of the Yukon Territory as well as beyond its borders. The following is a group of spoons that have different dot and circle patterns. These motifs, as well as most other engraved designs on spoons and other objects, have red ochre rubbed into them to highlight the image. These spoons were also discussed in Chapter Two- Geometric & Decorative Arts and shown in figure # 37 on page 67. As stated with figure # 37, figure # 153 A is from the Canadian Museum of Civilization Museum collection and was collected by E.E. Stockton in Dawson City between 1901 and 1906. This Han spoon is made from mountain sheep horn. The spoon in B is on display at the MacBride Museum and there is no information about the spoon. C shows the front side of a spoon from the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) Collection that was originally

collected by the Anglican Church. There is also no information about this spoon. I have included this spoon as a Yukon spoon since this style was made throughout the interior Yukon and northern British Columbia.



A B C

Figure # 153; A: VI-F-5 CMC. B: MacBride Museum. C: CYFN Collection.

McClellan identifies this motif as:

> ...the dot-and-circle arrangement on the handle of a Southern Tutchone sheep-horn spoon is definitely supposed to represent the Big Headed Star Man. (McClellan 2001: 297)

McClellan tells the story of the Big Headed Star Man in another section of her book:

> The Southern Tutchone explain that the Big Dipper (yl'da") is a big-headed man who used to be able to take rabbits from the snares by his magic powers whenever he said "Hu, Hu." Finally an Indian shot him in the back-bone. The Big Headed man then told the Indian to look for him that night in the Northern sky, where he may still be seen today with the fatal arrow showing as a tiny star beside the second big one in the handle. (McClellan 2001: 78)

Below in figure # 154 is my painted image of the Big-headed Star Man story.

Figure # 154. The Big-headed Star Man Story. UvK painting.

In my discussions with the Elders about the Big Headed Star Man motif, they mostly felt that the designs were simply to make the spoon fancy. They did not see anything that looked like the Big Headed Star Man. This may be because too much time has passed and the relationship between the story and the motif has been forgotten. It could also be that the particular unidentified spoon that McClellan examined was indeed representing the Big Headed Star Man, but other spoons do not represent that same story. This motif is wide spread throughout the south-central Yukon, Alaska and into Northern British Columbia. The story is not that well known (although Southern Tutchone Elder Marge Jackson knew of it and my mother, Hazel Smith, pointed out the arrow in the back of the Big Headed Star Man when I was a child) and therefore the dot within a circle may not be exclusively related to the Big Headed Star Man story. Maybe the dot within the circle pattern is used to make up the overall design that represents a story or carries a meaning. Marge Jackson stated that her father, Little Jim, and her uncle made spoons like the ones shown above but she did not remember the designs. When she was looking at the spoons she felt that the pattern in figure # 153 C could be a person. This would then suggest that this spoon may have a story behind the imagery. When she looked at figure # 155 below, she felt that the half circle motif was more like the Big Headed Star Man. In an additional note, non-First Nations see the Ursa Major constellation as a dipper, the Big Dipper, but it may have been seen by First Nations as a big sheep-horn spoon. This was the main spoon used to serve food at potlatches and gatherings. It may be that the Big Headed Star Man motif was associated with spoons because of the Big Dipper constellation. Perhaps the dot within a circle design represents stars.

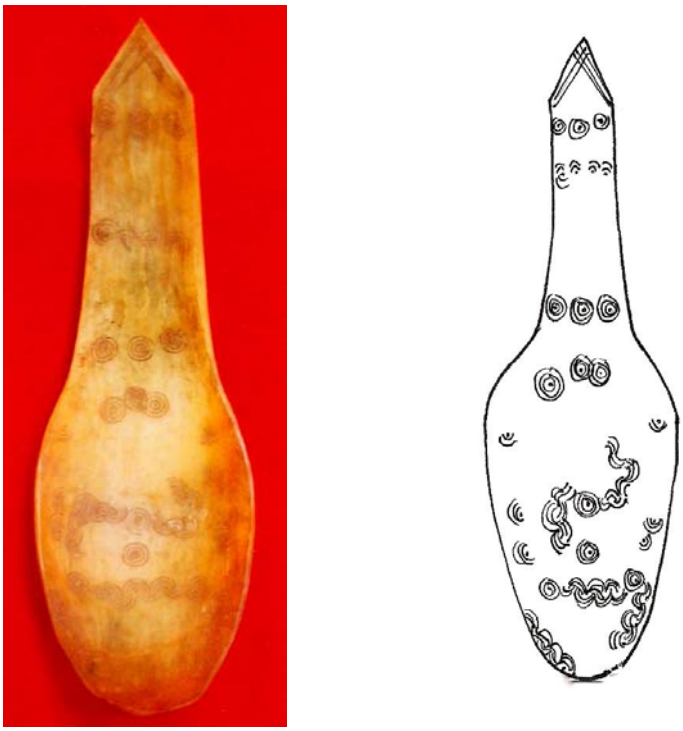
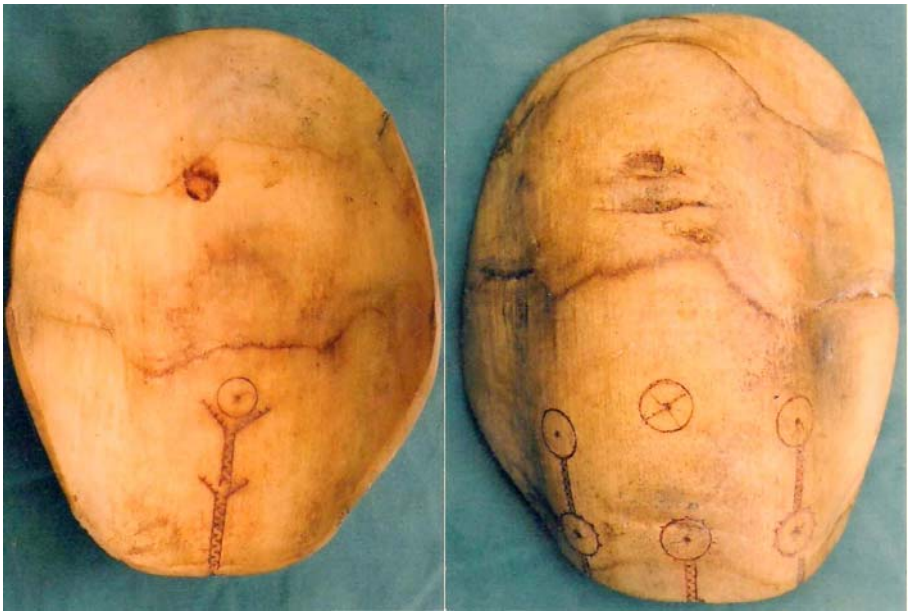


Figure # 155, Sheep horn spoon, VI-J-49 CMC. And UvK drawing of same spoon.

The dot and circle motif, or its variations, have also been used on bowls. In figure # 156 is the dot and circle motif on a sheep horn potlatch bowl that is on display in the Klukshu Museum. The motif on the top side of the bowl may be a stylized stick figure, as may be the patterns on the bottom side of the bowl. An interesting addition is the use of the "repeating cone" motif on both sides to make up the 'body' of the image.



Top side Bottom side

Figure # 156, bowl. Klukshu Museum.

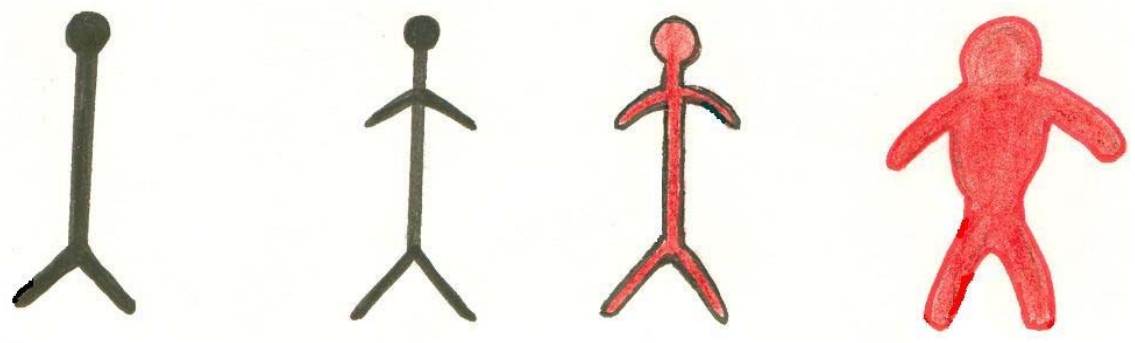
Any of these images, such as the dot within a circle motif, and pendants may represent humans and some may even represent actual people, spirits or deities. Because the creation of the image was so personal and individualistic, most of the time only the creator of the image would have known who or what it represented. Below is an excerpt from the book *World Art Studies,* explaining a non-western approach to the creation of portraiture.

> How identity is constructed and presence evoked differs from culture to culture, though, subject to concepts of individualism, a prevailing aesthetic, and a host of social or ritual beliefs particular to a given time or place. Nonetheless, three general categories of image emerge from the survey of portraiture across many cultures and time periods. The most widespread method of portrayal is by tributes of wealth and status but not necessarily bearing physical resemblance to the subject. Many cultures also use symbolic or emblematic images to evoke the individual through various associational characteristics as site, clothing, and literary convention, that is, through visual reference to the subject's name in acronym or proverbial form. Finally, portraiture includes works based on likeness, the result of a confrontation between artist and subject-or some facsimile in the case of posthumous portraits. The three categories of image-generic, emblematic, and representational-are not mutually exclusive. (van Damme & Zijlmans 2008: 304)

While the dot within circle motifs may be abstracted human figures in symbolic or emblematic form, the left image in figure # 153 starts to look like a stick figure. It begs the questions whether we are dealing with the image of a person, spirit or deity. This image leads on to the motifs I will examine next: stick figures.

Stick figures

Throughout the Yukon and beyond its borders are a wide range of engraved or painted 'stick' figures and stylized faces and people. These stick figures were mostly engraved onto wooden staffs, gambling sticks and bone and antler tools as well as painted on drums and arrow quivers. In figure # 157 is a number of examples of various engraved, carved or painted stick people from this region. Example A is a simple stick figure, part of a series, found on a very old Gwich'in bone skinning knife from the Klo-kut site. The artifacts recovered from the Klo-kut site are between 1000 and 1200 years old. See figure # 158 for my drawing of that bone skinning knife to show how the figures are placed on the knife.



A B C D

Figure # 157, various stick figures

Note that the Klo-kut stick figures are placed on a line that may represent the ground. Are these people travelling? At the end of the knife are a series of four lines with dots at the end of the line. Do these also represent people? Are the people standing on the line travelling to those other people's location? Are these figures at the other end of the bone skinning knife in the sky? If that is the sky, are they Sky People?

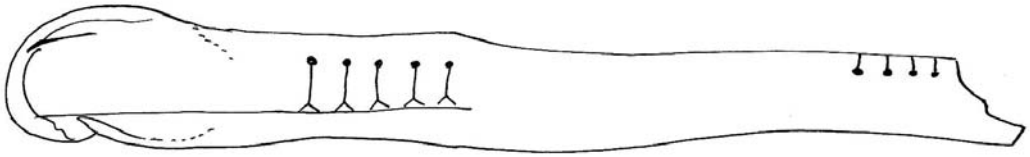


Figure # 158. Klo-kut bone skinning knife. CMC. UvK drawing.

When you examine an artifact like the Klo-kut knife there are many unanswered questions. A next example is about the identification of species that the image represents: see the illustrations below. The animal is thought to be a caribou according to MacBride Museum staff. These images are engraved on what they identify as a Tutchone speaker's staff. See figure # 159 for views of both sides of the medallion. I do question if these are renderings of caribou and if this is even a 'speaker's staff'. I question the caribou identification based on the antler construction. I have learned that often the caribou antlers are longer and sometimes point forward. Moose antlers are bigger and wider while the antlers on the animals on the medallion appear to have small horns that point toward the back. Could they be sheep or mountain goats, with their smaller horns? Or do they represent large ears of a moose.

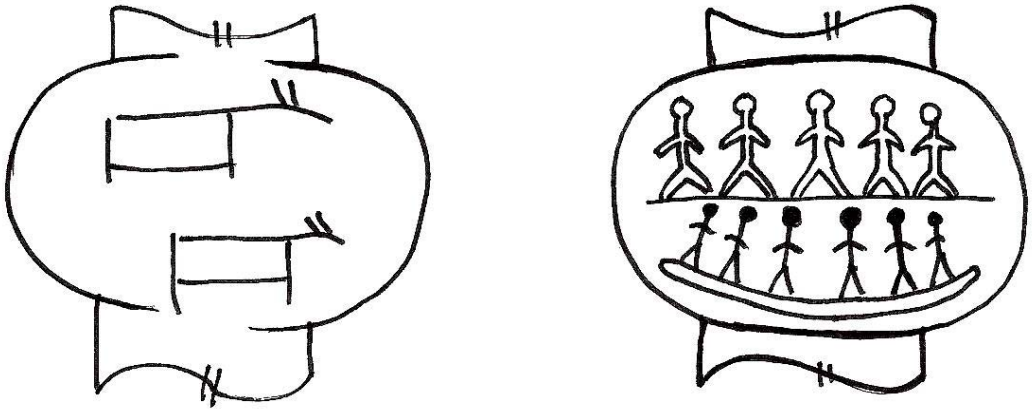


Figure # 159, detail of speaker's staff. 1973.1.158, MacBride Museum. UvK drawing.

Both caribou and moose were a major source of food, clothing and tools in the southern Yukon. There are many caribou and moose in the Tutchone territories so it would make sense that these animal images were placed on objects. But sheep and mountain goats were also hunted and were used in much the same way as caribou and moose, with the added benefit of being able to make sheep horn spoons. One of the common early methods of rendering moose and caribou leaves us no surviving examples since the images were drawn in the snow by Gwich'in hunters to leave a message to the other hunters in their group. The images showed the way to the other hunters after they had split up and one of them had been successful in getting an animal. In figure # 160 is my drawings based on Cornelius Osgood's Kutchin snow drawings in *Contributions to the Ethnography of the Kutchin* on page 92. The

designs are simple outlines and the caribou have antlers while the moose do not. Maybe the animals with the antlers are caribou, because in nature both males and female caribou grow antlers every year, males starting in March and females in June. The male's antlers drop off starting in November and the females keep their antlers all winter until just before spring. On the other hand, only the male moose grows antlers and the males start growing and dropping their antlers the same time as the male caribou. Since at least the female caribou have antlers all winter, drawing antlers to represent the caribou makes sense since these drawing were done in the snow during winter.

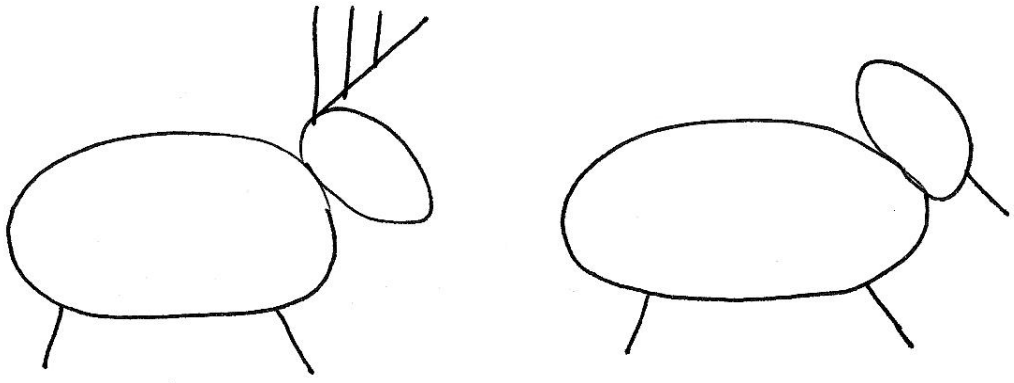
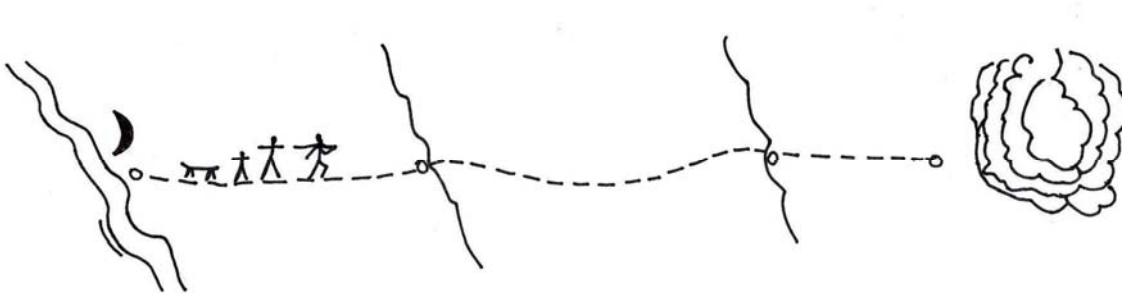


Figure # 160. Caribou and moose hunter identification drawings. A, caribou; B, moose. UvK drawings after Osgood.

Note that the antlers of the caribou are pointed forward and have a series of lines coming off them in a manner reflective of real caribou antlers. The other caribou renderings can be seen in figures # 308 on page, # 309 on page 296 and # 315 on page 300. I get the impression that if the animal rendered is a larger game animal, they are often identified as deer or caribou, but some of these identifications may be incorrect. See figure # 240 on page 235 for an example of a beaded moose and note the large antlers.

The above example is not the only type of image-message left for others to read. In the next figure, # 161 is a series of stick figures left as a message to other people in their group. My rendering of the drawn message is based on the image from page 159 in James Kari's *Tatl'ahwt'aenn Nenn': The Headwaters People's Country*. In the book it states:

> Around the turn of the century, prospector-explorer Addison Powell wrote this excellent description of Ahtna trail signs (1909:286-88).
>
> > When these Indians break camp to go on a hunt, or some trading post, they indicate how many persons have departed and the course that they took by sticking a pole in the ground for each person, and leaning it in the direction he has gone. To each pole is attached a remnant of some masculine or feminine wearing apparel to indicate the sex of the person in represents. Age is indicated by the length of the pole. A cache post, or surface of an old tree nearby, may be found marked with charcoal, or a lead pencil... bearing such diagram as the following:



> This would mean that a man with a gun, a squaw, a little girl and a dog had left the bank of the river, when the moon was half full; that their first day travel will terminate on the bank of a creek, where they will camp on the near shore; that their next day's travel will terminate on the bank of another creek where they will camp on the opposite shore; and that at noon of the next day, they will make their final camp at the foot of the mountain. (Kari 1985: 159)

Figure # 161. Travelling family drawings. UvK drawings after Powell.

In this description there is the use of poles which was quite common in the Yukon. The images drawn above are typical stick figures, done in the same manner as we have already seen in figures # 157 & 158.

Going back to the human stick figures in figure # 157 B on page 179 we see an engraved figure with arms. It is part of a series as shown in figure # 159 on the speaker's staff from the MacBride Museum. It appears these people are on a boat. Other than the addition of arms the speaker's staff figures are identical to the Gwich'in figure. I will examine C and D later in this section.

The speaker's staff that the stick figures are on is painted in red and has seagull feathers and trade (?) ribbons attached. Cruikshank says of this staff:

> The face of the medallion is divided, as if into the red summer world and the white winter world, and the figures in the winter world seem to be traveling in a boat." (Cruikshank 1991: 108)

Cruikshank explains the two images on the medallion in figure # 156 as follows:

> In the beginning of time, the horizon came down to the earth to make a barrier. On one side of the barrier was a snow-covered winter world, where everything was white-animals, people, and other living things. The other side was the world of ordinary reality, as we now understand it. In many of the oldest stories, people who are stolen away to the world of myth-time cross the barrier-going under a log or under a point of lane that rises to give them passage-and arrive in this winter world. When the trader Robert Campbell first arrived in the Yukon in 1848, many people thought that he had come from this winter world because of his white skin. (Cruikshank 1991: 41)

There is no clear explanation of the purpose of this staff, or complete meanings of all the images. Similar images were found on a pictograph on a rock face at a place called Moose Creek close to Fairbanks. (This site was destroyed by the United States Air Force in World War II to increase security for their Air Force base.) This location is in the Tanana traditional territory. This explanation is on record at the MacBride Museum and the author of the report is Martin Gutowski. At the time he was a Master's degree student at the University of Fairbanks.

"My research has gathered a connection between a local Athabascan creation story of a giant they call Yaachox and a figure in the Giddings report. The oral tradition refers to the image of the largest one shown in the center of the attached scan of Moose Creek pictographs.

The Yaachox story is about a race of giants like the Greek Titans who existed before the world was like it is now. Yaachox did battle with an evil giant and killed the last one. After that Yaachox separated earth and sky by pushing the sky up to its present height. Yaachox translates as "Big Sky" as the name applies to his final act. Richard McKennan recorded this story as Yatco in his 1939 report on the Upper Tanana Athabascans. This story is prevalent throughout the Athabascan regions of North America.

"There are similar elements in your story from Angela Sidney about "How the Animals Broke Through the Sky". Especially interesting to me is the reference to the separation between summer and winter worlds on the medallion. The two groups of men in boats on the Moose Creek pictographs and the two groups of men on the medallion are very similar. I know form alone is not the only basis for making a connection between rock art images and other renderings on artifacts, but some researchers have asserted that men in boats are sometimes used as a calendar to indicate lunar months. The shape of the boat is a symbol for a crescent moon.

"If the men shown on the medallion are to indicate the number of months immersed in summer and winter respectively, it is off by one or two months. McKennan reported that the Tanana people reckoned seasons by 13 lunar month names, but Kobuk area Athabascans named 12. Either way the number of men figures in both the boats at Moose Creek and your medallion are the same: six and five. However there are four tally marks and eight tally marks above the Moose Creek men in boat groups, yielding the dozen needed for a monthly total. If a person stretches it a bit, the missing months can be the boats themselves carrying the others through the seasons of spring and fall as intermediaries. The story about the two worlds of summer and winter in your book do mention the mediating affect of the weather acting to bring about the seasonal changes. According to McKennan, the Athabascan year seems to begin in the fall when the moose are moving and plump for harvesting."

Martin Gutowski was not the only person analyzing the Moose Creek pictographs. In Frederica de Laguna and Dale DeArmond's *Tales From the Dena* is another analysis of the Moose Creek pictographs. They state:

> The most interesting landmark of this kind was the cliff with red paintings on its face, right where Moose Creek enters a slough of the Tanana River about eighteen miles above Fairbanks. These pictures marked the place where Raven is supposed to have made women from men. (…) The pictures are of human or humanoid figures in various attitudes, ranging in size from five-and-a-half to twenty-five inches in height. (…) The largest figure, I suggest, is Raven, standing erect like a person, his skinny wings like outstretched arms. Other pictures are of persons in groups. In one group, the people apparently are all marching in the same direction. In another, three persons are enclosed in a circle, with three others outside; this may represent three people looking down through the smokehole into a house with three occupants. Of particular interest are the two representations of people in boats: five (women?) in one boat, with four tally marks above, and five men in another, with eight tally marks above.

> What is surprising about the boats is that they seem to be dugouts with raised prow and stern. (DeArmond & de Laguna 1995: 303)

Below in figure # 162 is three of the six pictographs images from the Moose Creek site that I drew. I wonder if there is a relationship between four women in one boat and the men in the other boat and the location where Raven made the women. Is this possibly a scene from when Crow made the first women? This story of Crow making the first women is also common in the Yukon and both the Tanana and Yukon First Nations versions are essentially the same. There are only men in the world and the men know there is something special about a rough part of the river by a rock cliff or tunnel. It is very dangerous and the men cannot get there; those who try end up drowning. Crow comes along using his power. He can paddle his canoe into the area and once in the special area he catches a bunch of vaginas. When he returns to the men he puts the vaginas between the legs of some of the men and takes off their penises. In this way he creates women. The paintings of Raven and boats are placed on a rock cliff where in the above story Raven supposedly made women. I therefore suspect there is a connection. In the drawing below, on the left, is Raven and in the middle the boat with the possible women and on the right the boat with men. I do not know in what order the images were placed on the rocks and I am just showing three of the six. It appears that Crow is in the canoe with the five people. Is he bringing four women with him?

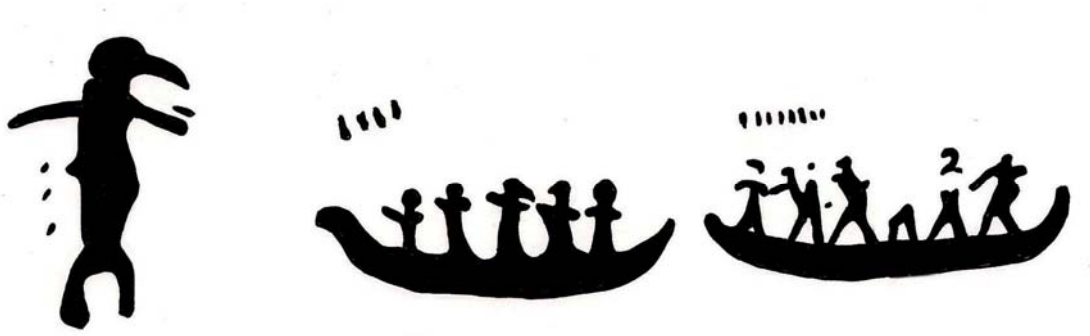


Figure # 162. Three pictographs from the Moose Creek site. UvK drawings after Giddings.

There is another pictograph of men in a boat but this time it is an Inland Tlingit pictograph and is related to another story. See my drawing of the pictograph in figure # 163.

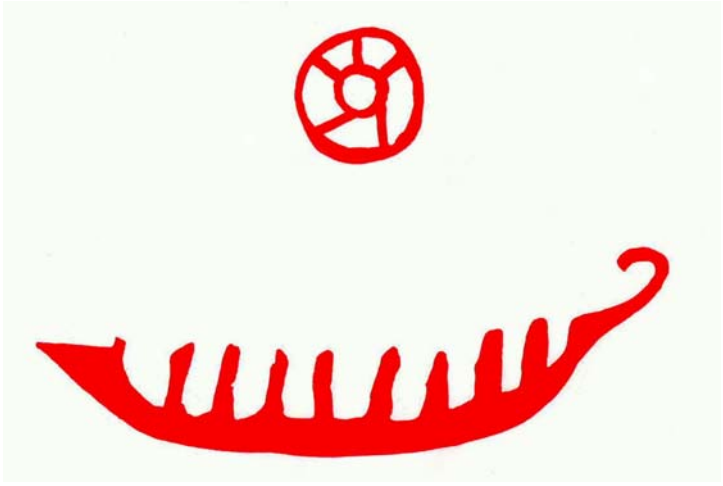


Figure # 163. People in boats. UvK drawing.

There are a couple of versions of this story in *My Old People Say.* I will cite one version here:

> While q'a gEx'gE' was still alive, a New yEnyedi man called q'adu tłuq' brought the first large cedar dugout canoe up the Taku River from the coast. He is said to have forced a slave from the s'itkedi sib of s'itqo, near Sumdum on the coast, to carry the canoe over the pass to Atlin Lake. According to my koq□hItan informant, the slave was killed in the canoe and then thrown overboard at high noon when the party reached a rocky point called yudeywAn qutuq' on a small island opposite the present town of Atlin. q'adu tłuq' commemorated the event by painting a red pictograph on the rocks 15 feet above the water. It shows the sun at its zenith, and the chief and his nephews in the canoe. The name of the slave was yAx□□. (McClellan 2001: 465)

In the other version it is the slave who paints the pictograph but does not state that the slave is then killed. The sun is similar to the pictograph at the confluence of the Alsek and the Tatsheshini River in Southern Tutchone territory in northwestern British Columbia in figure # 35 on page 67. These pictograph boats do look a bit like the image in figure # 159.

When I first started my research I did not think there were any local pictographs. Besides the Alsek and the Tatsheshini River, Atlin Lake and Moose Creek there are pictographs in Southern Tutchone Han territories. They are not easy to locate so there very well may be other ones waiting to be discovered.

I will return to the staff images in figure # 159 which is shown again in figure # 164 below. As we can see there are a number of possible explanations for the imagery and the purpose of the staff. The museum describes the staff as either a song stick or speaker's staff. I have not come across any other references to speaker's staffs in the Yukon other than what artist Stan Peters told me. His information came from well-known Elder George Dawson. And the other reference is what the people of Ross River told me "Speaker's Staffs". Dawson called these types of artifacts 'singing totem poles'. Dawson went on to explain to Peters that the singing totem poles were limited to about four feet in height and often were decorated with either a painted and/or carved Wolf or Raven head. These represented one of the two moieties in the Yukon. Leading a semi-nomadic lifestyle and the smaller size of trees resulted in staff height limitation of about four feet. I wonder if these 'singing totem poles' were a variation of the ceremonial dance paddles known as Ganhooks. Did the person carry the pole and sing or lead the singing at a potlatch? The Ganhooks were carried to lead the dance during a potlatch, hence the possible connection. I will be analyzing various dance paddles in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch& Death.

Personal communications with First Nations Elders from Ross River, both Kaska and Mountain Dene, revealed that the "Speaker's Staff" had images either carved and/or painted on them which told a story. The staff was 'speaking' the story. My informants stated that they did not know of any staff that was passed from person to person during meetings. Using these references the 'speakers' staff shown in figure # 164 may be a 'speaking' staff.

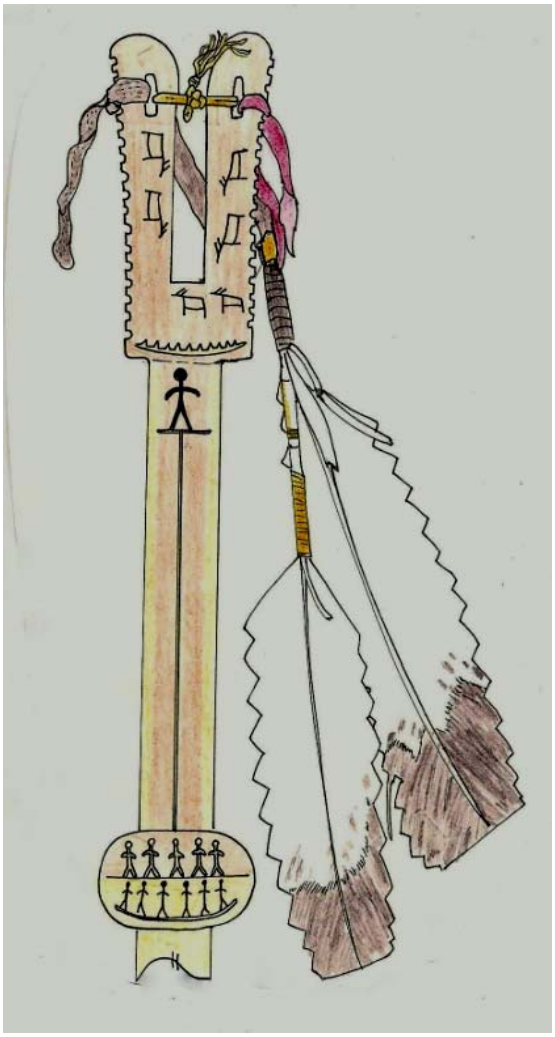


Figure # 164, detail of speaker's staff. 1973.1.158, MacBride Museum. UvK drawing.

I have also read references about, and seen photos of, speaker's staffs that were used by the Northwest Coast Indians but I have not seen any evidence of these having any influence in the interior of the Yukon. I think the staff in figure # 164 may have had other or additional uses and symbolisms. It may have been used in trade rituals or negotiations. Since First Nations people thought that the trader Robert Campbell came from the white winter world, from a part of the world where they could not go, they may have seen a relationship with the coastal Tlingits, who also would not allow the Tutchone into their world. The Tlingits were major trading partners and came from a far away and basically unknown land, as did the trader Robert Campbell. Maybe the figures are on a raft which the Tlingits commonly built to ride down the Takhini and Yukon Rivers to trade with Athapaskan people along the way. Supporting the idea that the image is a raft is that it is the only image where the people's legs are shown as they would be seen when standing on a raft. In the pictographs above you cannot see the legs as you would not when a person is sitting in a canoe.

The next figure shows a medicine stick. It is the only other Yukon staff I have come across that has designs on it. It is of fairly recent manufacture, made in 1961, but the man who made it was in his seventies. This would put his birth date between 1880 and 1890. Well known Yukon artist Jim Robb was friends with Harry Silverfox and in 1961 Robb asked Harry to make him a "medicine stick". He made no conditions or requests, simply wanting a medicine stick. The result is the medicine stick in figure # 165.

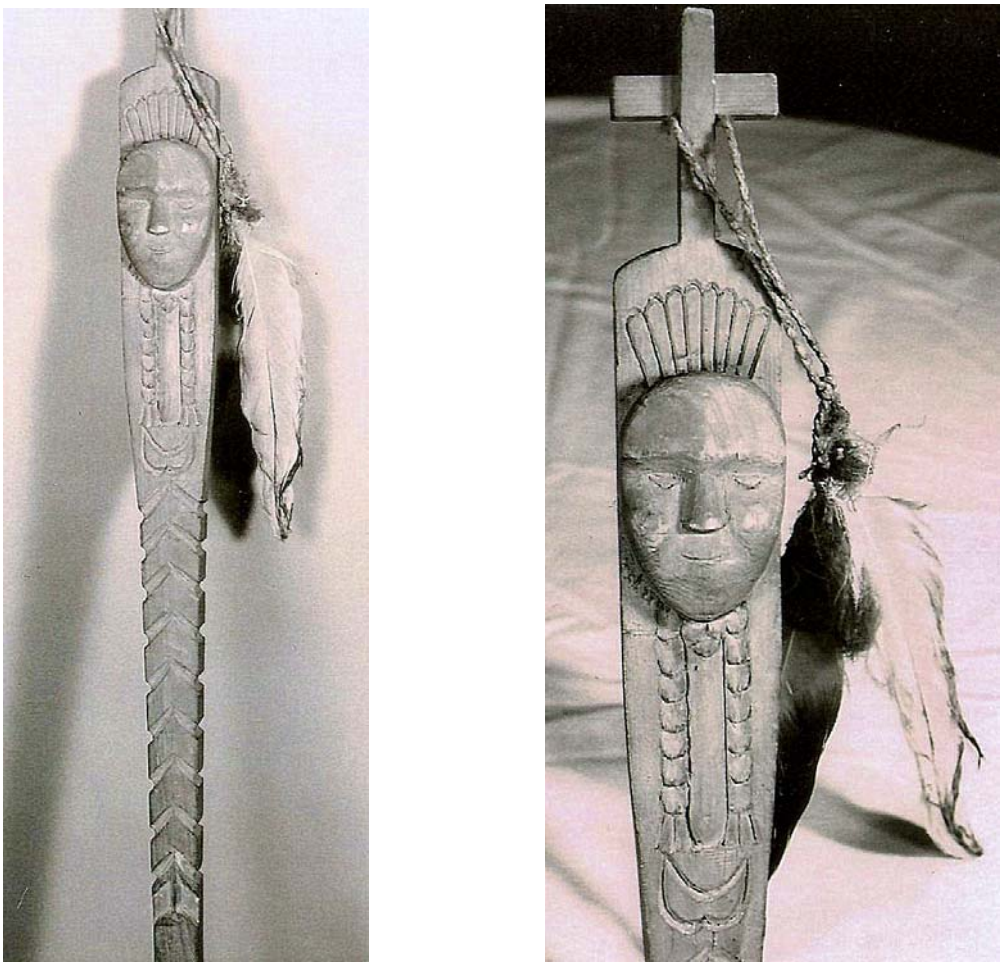


Figure # 165, Northern Tutchone Medicine stick carved by Harry Silverfox. Photograph courtesy of Jim Robb.

Harry Silverfox was Northern Tutchone from Big Salmon. He was known for making traditional Tutchone items. The medicine stick has a cross at the top and Jim Robb felt that this was a Christian reference. There is a fan of feathers behind the man's head and it appears that he has braided pony tails. The face is done in the typical manner of a carved face for a mask. See the mask section in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death. Jim Robb did not inquire about the meanings of all the motifs but preferred to simply accept the medicine stick as it was.

Returning back to the speaker's staff in figure # 164, I would like to make another connection with trade with the Tlingit and how that relates to the seagull feathers on the staff. When I asked my great-grandmother, Mrs. Annie Ned, about the seagull feathers on this staff in the early 1990s, the conversation went something like this (this is from memory, as I was not doing formal research at the time, but was simply trying to learn more about my culture):

> **Ukjese:** Annie, why did they use seagull feathers on the speaker's staff that is at the MacBride Museum and not other types of feathers?
> **Annie:** Them Tlingits, they come to trade, them Tlingits come from the coast...
> **Ukjese:** ah...ok...but what about the seagull feathers?
> **Annie:** Them Tlingits...they come from the coast to trade...they come over here...
> **Ukjese:** ah...oh...ok...? (Ned 1993, personal communication)

After a few more attempts to get a satisfying answer, I could see I was not going to get any other response from her. Not having received a clear answer, I went away confused, believing my over one hundred year old great grandmother was finally becoming senile. As time went by I thought about her answer and later realized that she was talking about the coastal Tlingits who used to come from the Alaskan coast to trade with the Tutchone, right up until the beginning of the 1900s. The Tlingits would start their first trading trips in the spring and conclude their final trading trips in the fall. They came for the wealth that the Tutchone could provide such as hide clothing that was popular on the coast, gopher skin robes, furs, copper, shaman pendants, scratchers and even dolls. In fact, the trade was so important to the coastal Tlingits that they never sent slave raiding expeditions to the Yukon interior. They did not want to upset the trade agreements. Instead they raided other areas or traded for slaves from the Haida and sometimes trading those slaves to the interior Athapaskans.

Seagulls also come only in the spring, for the wealth of the land, and leave in the fall. As trade was an important part of southern Yukon First Nation life, the symbol of trade, which could be the seagull, would have a prominent place among images. It thus may have been used on the important speaker's staff during trade ceremonies. I now understand this to be the answer my great grandmother was trying to give to me. To support this hypothesis I like to refer to the old village of Hutchi. Near this village is an island called Seagull Island. On this island are Tlingit sticks that are decorated with feathers. The Tlingits from the coast had trading partners in the Yukon and in Hutchi. In fact, Hutchi is a Tlingit name; Hûch'i Âyi, meaning "last one". For those Tlingit traders, Hutchi was their last stop. Other Tlingits went to trade in other locations. In the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations publication *Chu'ena Keyi: Hutchi History Research* Seagull Island is mentioned:

> Seagull Island, the extremely small island located at the north end of the middle Hutchi Lake is known as *Mürk'ay T'äwa Män* which means seagull island. The lake takes its name from this island. The island is named, is a place associated with the visiting Tlingit traders. It is understood that wooden posts were placed on the island by the visitors; each post represented one of the Tlingits who came to Hutchi to trade. According to Ms. Stella Boss, the Hutchi people were told that when a pole fell, it meant that man it represented died. When the last marker fell, all the traders would be dead. Both the island, and the nearby round-shaped bay on the west shore of the lake, was considered by the Hutchi people to be restricted places where one should not to go. (Champagne and Aishihik First Nations 1998: 48)

Since Seagull Island was a restricted place the wooden posts may still be laying on the island. It was this meeting with Annie Ned that made me more aware about seeking information from Elders: their life experiences are at times so different from my own, that the information presented posed at times as a puzzle. I also later learned that Elders often will tell you what they think you need to know as opposed to what you are trying to learn at that time.

The feathers on the staff at Macbride Museum are cut quite uniquely. They are cut in a zigzag fashion as you can see in figure # 164. This pattern occurs often in Yukon Athapaskan imagery and on some of the older Ice Patch feathers. The Ice Patch collection is a series of artifacts that have been recovered from the melting ice patches on the mountain tops in the southern Yukon. The melting is caused by global warming. The first artifacts were discovered in 1997 and yearly new artifacts are found, from 7300 year old weapon points to 1400 year old moccasins. The Ice Patch feathers are about 5000 years old, so the practice of cutting feathers has been around a long time. In figure # 166 is two photographs showing the Ice Patch feathers and patterns.

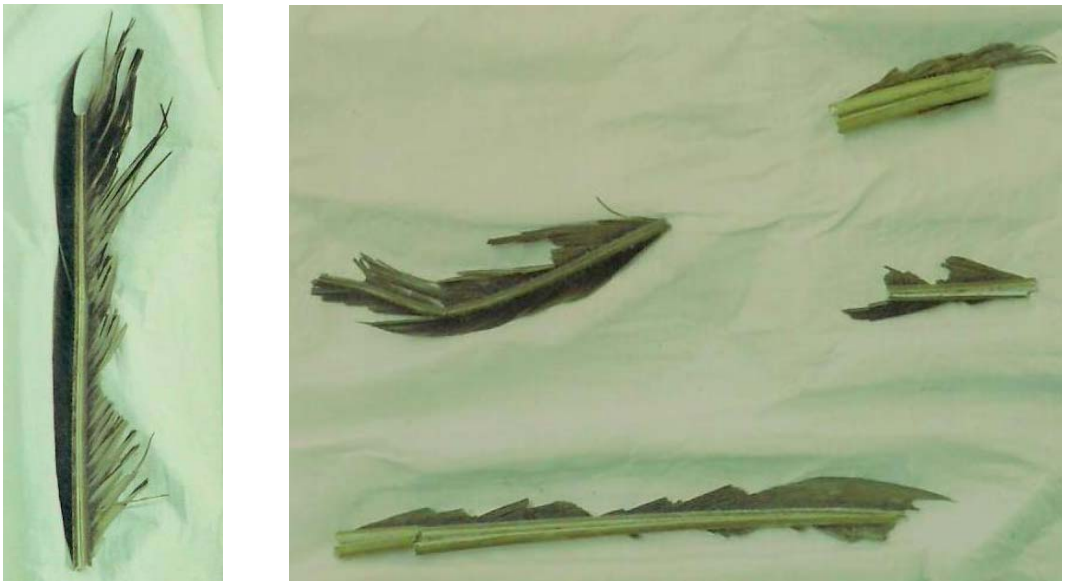


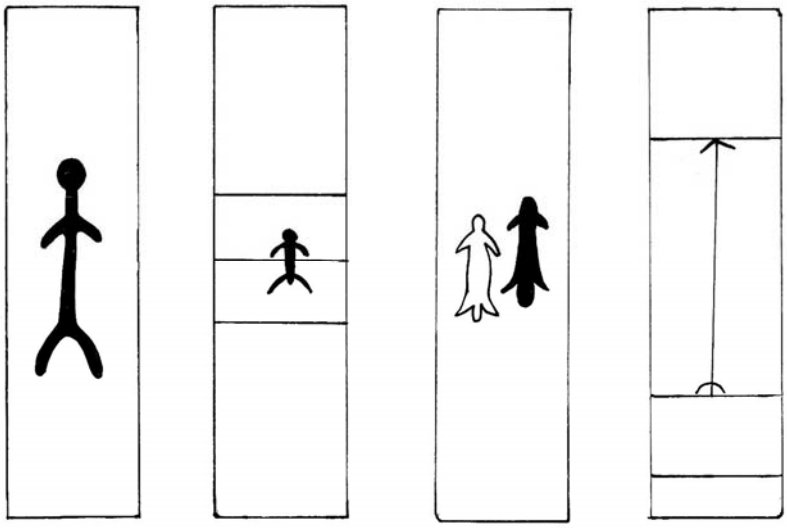
Figure # 166. JcUu-2:1, 4580 + 40BP, IPC.

Stick figures as well as silhouette figures were added to stick gambling sticks. Stick gambling in the Yukon is now more commonly known as hand games.
The engraved Tahltan stick figures in figure # 167 are painted in either red or black on gambling sticks and were originally collected by George Emmons, the well known ethnologist. These sticks are also described by Judy Thompson in *No Little Variety of Ornament*. The figures below are from G.T. Emmons *The Tahltan Indians,* 1911, plate xix, University of Pennsylvania Museum publication. Thompson says this about the sticks:

> The Tahltan gambling sticks are of beautifully finished wood, painted in red and black. Some designs are functional: encircling lines and bands represent the value and name of each stick. Other motifs include simple, highly stylized representations of an "animal form or natural object intimately associated with the life of the people"...These may have represented the spiritual assistants of the sticks' owners, painted in an appeal for success in the game." (Glenbow 1987: 145)

What we can see from these gambling sticks is a whole series of stylized figures and a few, such as the man and beaver, are easily recognized. Other figures on other gambling sticks, such as the canoe and arrows, are also fairly easy to identify. There are some motifs that cannot be identified. They may have represented the spiritual assistants of the sticks' owners. And again, as stated earlier, knowledge about the meaning behind the representation might always have been restricted to the creator of the object.

Figure # 167A represents a human while figure B is listed as a human but the body extends past the legs, which is unusual. It may be a stylized human but we cannot discount that it may also be some other creature. Figure C is a pair of beavers, one dark and the other light coloured. Is this to represent a male and female beaver? Figure D is an arrow.



A: Man B: Man C: Beaver D: Arrow

Figure # 167, Tahltan stick figures on gambling sticks. UvK drawings.

Two more gambling stick images are shown in figure # 168. The top stick figure is listed as a dog. While the image may be a dog and dogs were sometimes used in hunting, overall, dogs were held in very low regard by Athapaskans. The pose of the animal does look like a typical dog pose. One would not imagine a noble wolf being rendered this way. If it is a dog it may reflect a very low value of the gambling stick. I will discuss more about the dog-wolf status later in this chapter, when examining beaded dogs on a Tahltan jacket: see figure # 243 on page 236. The second image is listed as a canoe and is similar to the boats shown in figures # 159, # 162 & # 163.

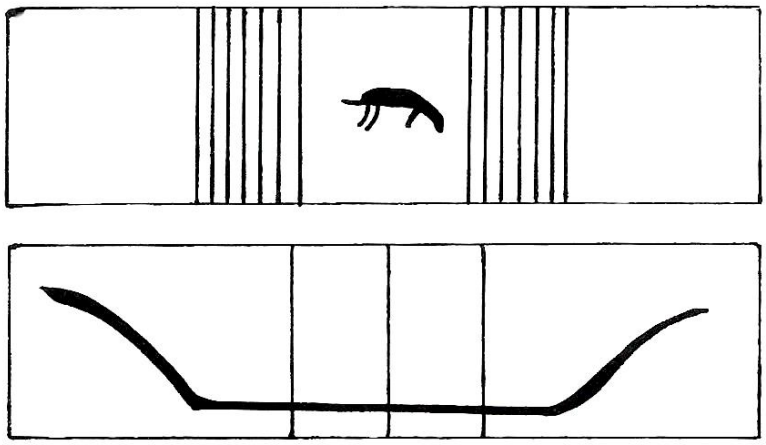


Figure # 168, Tahltan stick figures on gambling sticks. UvK drawings.

The next stick figures are bordering on silhouette figures but I will examine them here. They are the stick figures shown in figure # 157 D. Two humans are painted red on the inside of a drum along with a possible building. The scene appears to be a church in the middle with a 'stick' style person on each side. There is no other information about the imagery on this drum. The drum belongs to the Glenbow Museum and was acquired by the museum in 1970 by a collector and is believed to be made decades before the 1970s. What appears at first to be unusual is that the painting is on the inside of the drum. This may have

been done to protect the image and in fact was a fairly common practice, as seen on other drums presented in this thesis. While it did protect the image, it also hid the image from view most of the time. Most creators of the images however preferred to have the image visible on the outside face of the drum and accept the wear on the image. See figure # 169 of a photograph and of my drawing of the drum.

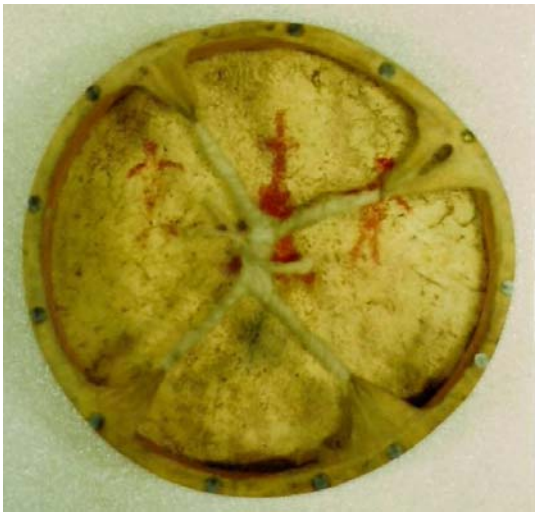


Figure # 169. Tahltan drum. R1108.9, Glenbow Museum. UvK drawing.

In figure # 170 is a Tutchone image painted on a drum that was collected by Poole Field in Ross River in 1913. I have already shown this drum in the Introduction in figure # 5 on page 30 and now I will examine the image closer. Ross River is a Kaska community with a number of Mountain Dene families. Around a hundred years ago there were a lot of Tutchone people in the area. The original Pelly River people were killed some time before that in a war with the Liard people. The resulting void of people was filled by the Tutchone people from the west and the Francis Lake Kaska from the south east. The Northern Tutchone people left the Ross River area before World War Two for reasons unknown. Perhaps the Tutchone moved because of easier trading available at the villages of Little Salmon and Carmacks.

The drum has a single thong crossing over the top, which would make this a hand-game or stick gambling drum. Presently in the Yukon, only drums with a piece of sinew stretched across the face of the drum are used for hand gaming. The drummer uses a double-beat, creating a rhythm that the players move to when playing. The Ross River Indians are generally considered to be top notch stick gamblers and are talked about by the Elders as loving stick gambling and playing and drumming all night long.

I have drawn the central figure which may be a person or a spiritual figure. While the figure is quite elaborate compared to the simple 'stick' figures we looked at before, you can find the 'root' of the stick figure in the design. See figure # 171.

Figure # 170, Tutchone drum. VI-Q-39, CMC.

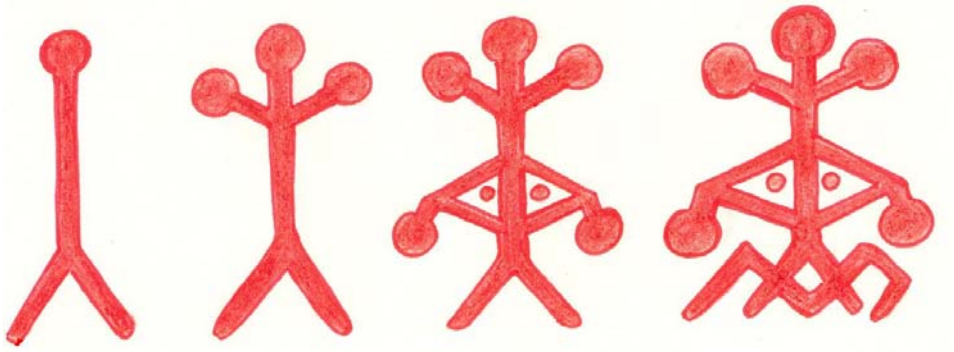


Figure # 171, breakdown of human figure on the Tutchone drum.

This drum is in the Museum of Civilization and nobody knows what it is supposed to represent. There is a letter "P" on the drum and this may have been added by the maker to show his name or it may indicate that this drum belongs to Poole. Adding a person's initials to an object became quite popular at the turn of the twentieth century. When a person in the community learned to read and write the community members would get that person to initial their possessions.

While I was drawing these images for this book I got the feeling that the figure was a bit spider-like and that the zigzags may be nets. This reminded me of the story that Elder May Long told me about the Spider who saw that people were hungry but could not catch any fish. The spider changed into a man and then showed the people how to make fish nets that were based on his spider web. This saved the people and that is how people learned to make fish nets. While there is no proof that this image is the 'Spiderman' I thought the image fitted the story and therefore suggested the idea.

Outlined figures

Next images are outlined human figures. See figure # 172 for an example of a Koyukon human image. While the Koyukon are down the Yukon River in Alaska, they neighbour the Tanana whose eastern territory extends into the Yukon Territory. This image is from a place called Old Fish Camp on the Yukon River and is shown in De Laguna's *Prehistory of Northern North America* on page 137. Note that this human image is slightly more complex than the earlier stick figures. Another feature is the use of the horizontal lines

across the body. We will see later that this is a common feature among the Inland Tlingit human figures. The image is described as: "Caribou scapula scraper with incised designs representing a man and several birds." I did not draw most of the scapula as De Laguna did, but focused on the human image itself as well as what is possibly a bird image behind the man.

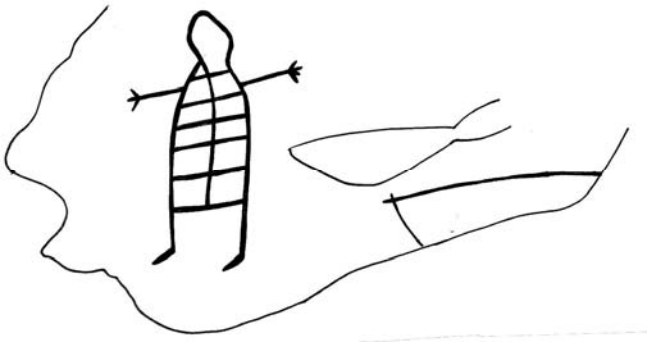


Figure # 172, Man and birds on scapula. UvK drawing after De Laguna drawings.

Another example of outlined Koyukon bird imagery is from the same village but from a different house. In figure # 173, on a scapula, is as De Laguna describes: "Incised design on caribou scapula scraper representing a duck." I drew the duck image the same as De Laguna drew it herself. Are these birds placed on the scapula to indicate what the owner wishes to get when hunting? But these are scraping scapulas and not the hunting scapulas used as moose calls. Are the different purposes irrelevant? Or is the bird a spiritual guide for that hunter? De Laguna indicates they are ducks, but based on the shape they may be seen as any possible type of birds such as grouse, geese and swans. One thing for certain, in the whole region swans were of spiritual significance. Therefore it could be a reasonable argument, even if the figurative image of swans are scarce, that since swan feathers and down were used in potlatches, by shamans and in other rituals, that the duck images below in figure # 173 may be swans. The drawing itself is rather interesting. Are there one, two or maybe even three birds shown in the engraving? It almost looks like two birds; one standing on the shore while a second bird is in the water and has its head under to feed. Yet the body of the standing bird seems to have two heads and the lines suggest another body behind it. If this is the case then there is a leg for each bird. If not, then the one bird has two legs. This is a typical Athapaskan engraving, showing the animal in a more or less realistic situation in nature which does not appear to be representing a clan or crest.

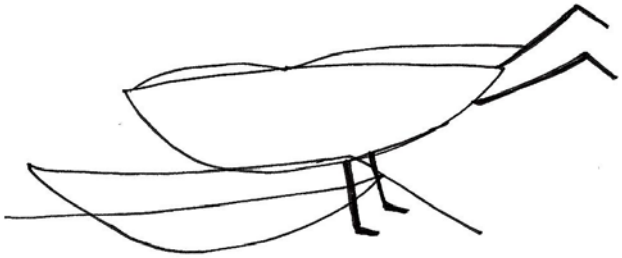


Figure # 173, bird on scapula. UvK drawing after De Laguna drawings.

Another possible outlined bird is an engraving on a spoon collected from Dawson City. This spoon is at the Museum of Civilization and is listed as Han. The spoon was collected by D.D. Stockton between 1901 and 1906 in Dawson City. See figure # 174 below.

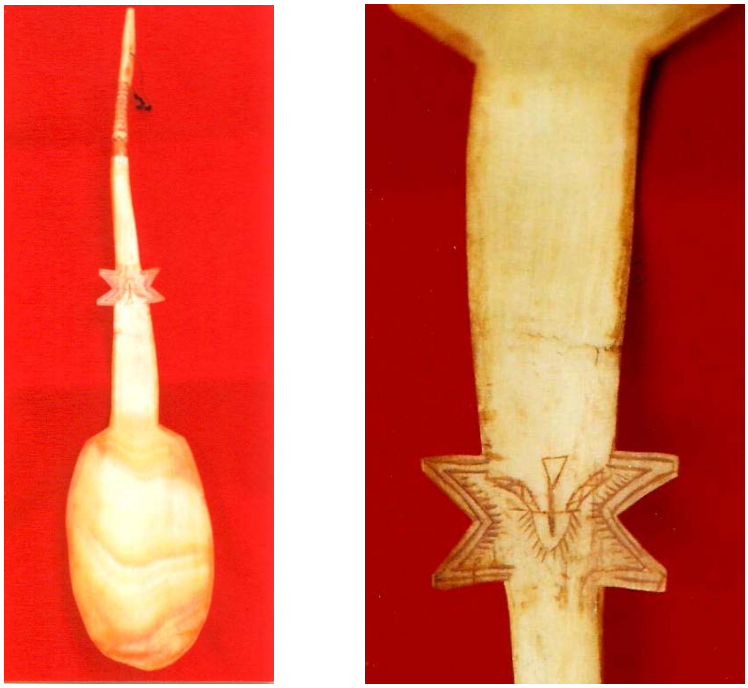


Figure # 174, Han spoon. VI-F-3, CMC.

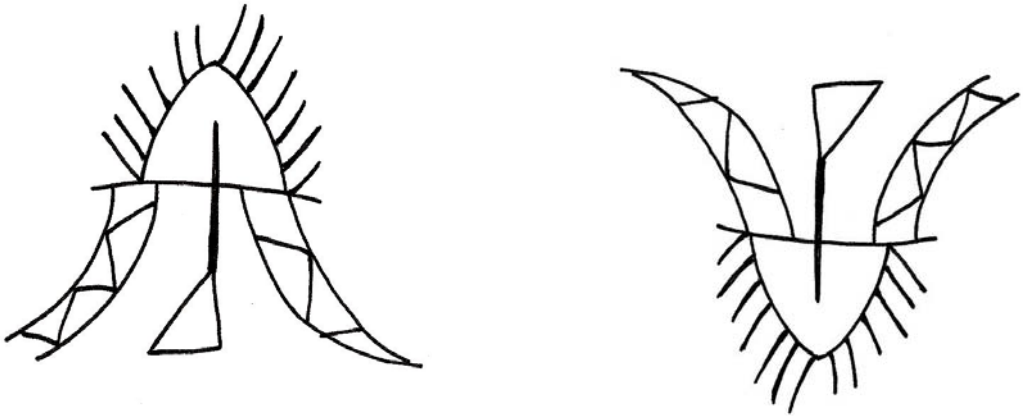


Figure # 175, two views of engraved image. VI-F-3, CMC. UvK drawing.

In figure # 175 I have sketched the design and shown it from two views for clarity. The view on the left as you look at the spoon standing upright, as in the photograph, and the image on the right if you looked at it while holding the spoon up. I believe the image to be some sort of bird. Even thou Athapaskans did not normally depict birds in a crest manner I think that maybe this may be is a clan crest or spiritual guide. After all there was a total freedom in the manner an artist may depict images so nothing would stop an artist from creating a crest image. My best guess is that the image is of Crow.

An example of another outlined figure is the fish which can be seen in the photograph on Patsy Henderson's drum in figure # 177. I have drawn a fish that is painted on a drum in figure # 176. This photograph of Mr. Henderson playing his drum in Carcross was taken in 1947. Mr. Henderson was present at the original discovery of gold that started the Klondike Gold Rush in 1896 and later in life became the chief of the Carcross people in the 1930s. During that time he would trap in the winter months and spent his summers lecturing about the Gold Rush, singing songs and telling Gold Rush and Native stories for the tourists that came through Carcross on the White Pass and Yukon Route train. He carried on with the

summer performances up until the 1950s. Over the years he used other drums that had different designs on them. The outlined fish on the drum is simple in design and has a single line going through its body longitudinally with a series of possibly the fish bones coming down from that line. The eye looks more like a human eye than a typical round eye of a fish. Could this be an indication that this fish is one of the fish people that are mentioned in the Yukon First Nations oral traditions? Also note the design on the dress of the woman standing behind Henderson. These appear to be killer whales which would make me think the woman is a member of the Tagish Daklaweidi clan (Killer Whale) of the Wolf moiety. I will show in more detail the Killer Whales in figures # 219 and # 220 on page 223 later in this chapter in the beaded figures section.

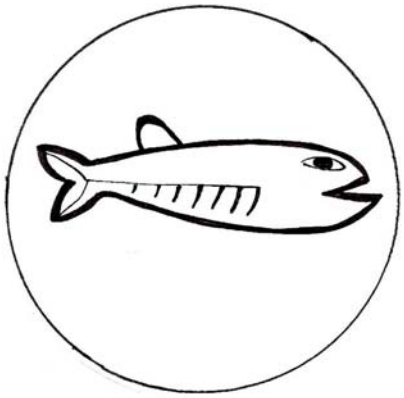


Figure # 176. Fish design on Patsy Henderson drum. UvK drawing.

Figure # 177. Patsy Henderson playing drum and singing. Undated photograph Courtesy of Skookum Jim Oral History Project. YA 88/58R #37.

Another drum (figure # 178) at the Manitoba Museum Collection is listed as Athapaskan-Tlingit and was made by a Teslin man. It came from the Mrs. I.O. Stringer collection. The catalogue card states: "Caribou skin stretched on frame made by Teslin Indian. Used at dances and medicine making. They beat the frame only. South Yukon." While in the process of collecting this drum, the frame may have been beaten as a demonstration but I don't think this was a common practice.

It is a unique design, a type of x-ray image of a stylized animal or person. One of the Elders thought it was a person. There is the "repeating dot" motif down the center of the composition with a series of ribs coming out of the center line. This is a typical Inland Tlingit practice. Very often in the figurative art of the Inland Tlingits they would have a center line in the body as well as a series of 'ribs' going across the body. Often there would be a series of dots along the center line, either where the ribs meet the line or between where the ribs meet the center line. You will see this motif in other Inland Tlingit figurative art later in this thesis.

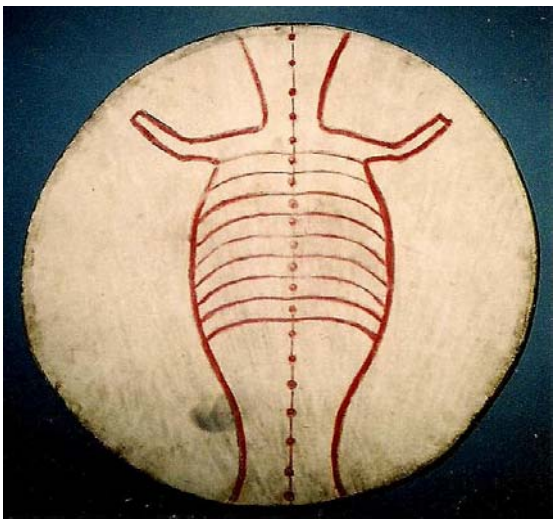


Figure #178. Inland Tlingit drum. H4-33-6, Manitoba Museum.

The drum came from Mrs. I.O. Stringer (Sadie), the wife of the Anglican Bishop of the Yukon, Isaac Stringer. Bishop Stringer had collected many First Nations artifacts during his travels in the northwestern part of Canada from 1892 until his death in 1934.

In the following figure, # 179 is another example of the Inland Tlingit series of ribs across the body. These two humans go beyond the basic outline by having facial details. The figures are from Teslin and are also on the front of a booklet entitled *Craft Manual of Yukon Tlingit* by George M. White. The caption on these figures reads: "Tlingit Ceremonial Cape-the cape shows the Old Tlingit Culture when the Tlingits were Coast People living mainly by fishing." For clarity, I have not included the beaded fish that were attached to the cape. Neither did I include the feet, since the original picture had the feet cut off. The men appear happy and successful fishermen. They are both smiling which is a common facial expression that the Inland Tlingits put on their figures. The figure on the left has a gaff while the figure on the right is swinging a club to hit a fish he is holding. There are two other fish on the cape, beaded fish that have been sewn on to the cape. On the cape one fish is on the forehead of the man with the gaff and the other fish is touching the right man's head. Why those beaded fish are placed at the heads of the two men is unknown. Maybe the image is showing what was on the fishermen's minds or it is indicating a spiritual connection with those fish.

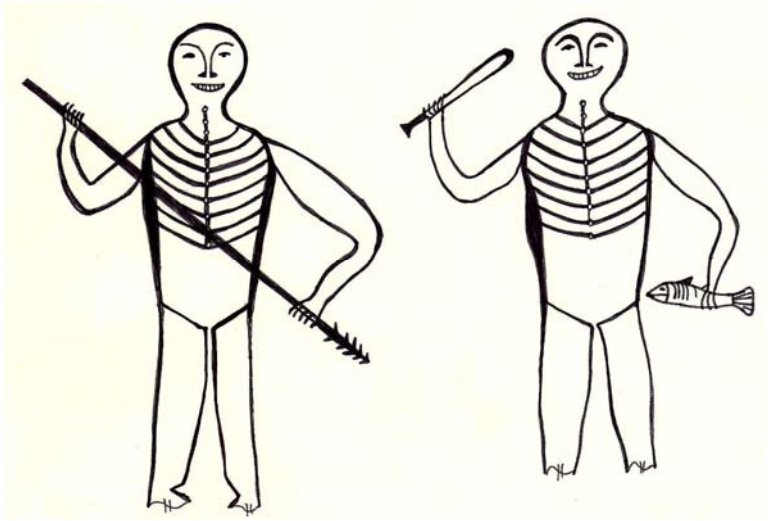


Figure # 179, Outlined Inland Tlingit human figures. UvK drawing.

In the next two outlined figures the image becomes more complex. The photograph in figure # 180 shows the front and back of the dance tunic that the figures are on. This photograph is from the Robert Ward fonds and the story of the two heads is Inland Tlingit from the Taku River area. The image with the two profiled heads is related to the following story that I have copied out of *My Old People Say*. It has its start at a mouth of a river on the coast near Sumdum glacier:

> Herring rakes are supposed to be swung sideways, but should never be lifted over the heads of people. On this occasion, one man lifted the rake too high, and started a fight which caused the koq□hltan [Cow sib] to split. Some went to Taku Harbor and then up the Taku River to Nakina, where they settled and made a "totem pole" for the ashes of their dead. On it they carved a Crow with two heads hanging from its mouth. Later, some members of the coastal branch of the sib came up the river and stole the post away. The Nakina koq□hItan then moved to Atlin and Teslin. At Teslin, the chief of the koq□hItan is the keeper of a white cloth dance shirt, on the back of which is a green painting of Crow with two human heads. This representation of Crow is called yA'atneyax (carrying something). The heads are said to be those of slaves. On the front of the same shirt are three joined human heads which encircle a salmon, and are known as 'Ick'a taxt. Apparently they represent spirits associated with the "Salmon hole" of the 'Ick'Itan (discussed below), but I did not learn the full story. (McClellan, 2001: 474)

> Parts of the 'Ick'Itan story is as follows:
>
> The 'Ick'Itan Sib
> …They derive their name from 'Ick' (deep place), which refers to the place in the stream where the salmon makes a deep hole and "stays in one place." As already noted, this is probably what is depicted on the Teslin koq□hItan shirt. The present owner of the shirt, however, calls himself koq□hItan and named only individuals from the coast as 'Ick'Itan… (McClellan, 2001: 477)

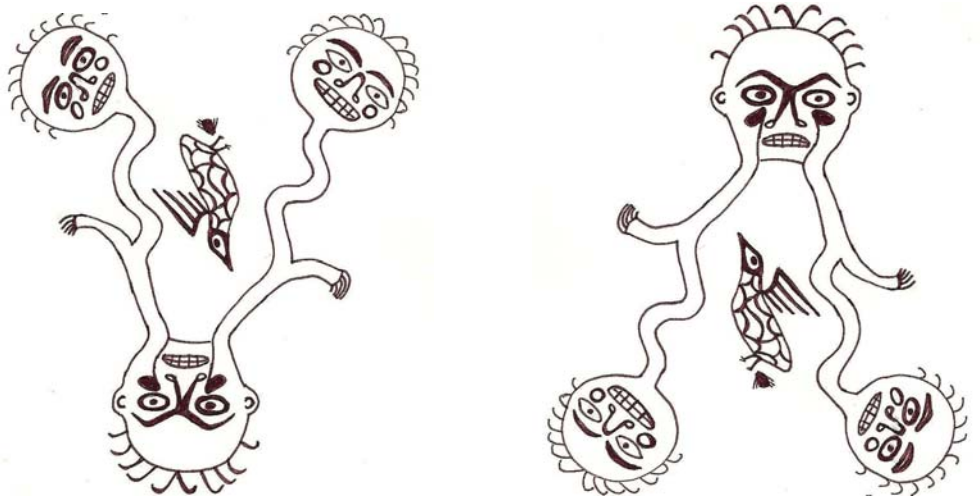
There is also a fish besides the bird and a design behind Crow's head. Is this design a reflection of the earlier totem pole that had the heads hanging from Crow's mouth? The profiles seem to be smiling, which as mentioned earlier often occurs in Inland Tlingit human renderings, but I wonder if the mouths are to represent the expression in death. The eyes are placed in the center of the heads and the ear is at the back. It is almost as if we are seeing two perspectives of the head: a side profile of the front of the head and a straight on view of the head from the eyes to the ears. Below the eye is a circle, maybe representing the cheek or a face painted design. In Chapter Eight-Art of the potlatch & Death, on the ganhooks we can clearly see that the artists include face painted designs on their portraits.

Figure # 180, Front and back view of images on Inland Tlingit dance shirt. Uvk drawing.

Figure # 181, image on Tlingit dance shirt. Uvk drawing.

As for the other image with the three joined heads, I show it with the right side up in figure # 182 A and upside down in B. In B we can see what may be a body, the bottom heads

being feet, the hands and a larger head on top. But the figure is presented on the dance shirt with the two heads on top and the one larger head at the bottom. McClellan stated that there are three joined human heads which encircle a salmon. I cannot see a salmon but there is a bird between the 'legs' with an object at the rear of the bird. The type of bird is unknown, but Crows are commonly rendered this way. There may be a link between Crow and the giant fish story reflected in this image. The object behind the bird is also unknown but may represent the salmon McClellan talks about. I have heard of Wealth Women pooping nuggets of gold. Could there be a connection here? As for the figure itself, I would have to guess that this is not a human from this world but from the myth time. During the myth time transformations were common, animals could take human form and sometimes humans took animal form, often at the desires of an animal. The heads are shown straight on and the eyes are correctly placed in the center of the head. The eyebrows, eyes and face layout have a slight coastal Tlingit feel to them, the same hint of coastal influence I have seen on some Southern Tutchone images. Note that these faces are not smiling. Is this because they are not human but animals, since they can't smile but they can show their teeth? Are these spiritual animals assuming human form? I have found that of all the art done in the Northwest Coast Indian art style, there are very few human smiling faces and almost all toothed animals are showing their teeth.



A **B**

Figure # 182, image on Tlingit dance shirt, A: top, right side up. B: bottom, figure shown upside down. Uvk drawing.

Next I will examine another complex outlined figure. It is on the inside of a drum that was collected in 1911 by D.D. Cairnes and is now in the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa. I earlier discussed this drum in figure # 31 on page 65 but will focus on the bird design here. The bird has a black painted silhouette head but the remaining parts are outlined and have a series of repeating dots throughout the body, wings and tail feathers. This bird design has a similar shape to the beaded birds on Kate Carmacks cape as seen in figure # 224 on page 226 and # 225 on page 227. There is a similarity to the painted birds shown in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch and Death. See figure # 183 for the drum painting of the bird. Catharine McClellan has identified this bird as an eagle but my assessment is that of a Crow, the black colour and the straight beak being the deciding factors. Crow is in the center of a circle and the four arrows point outwards. The circle and four directions are also on the other drums and are sometimes related to the creation of the world in which Crow remakes the world after the great flood.


Figure # 183, Inland Tlingit drum with bird. VI-J-80, CMC.

I have shown a progression from stick figures to quite complex outlined figures. I will next discuss silhouette figures.

Silhouette figures

I will start off with birds and move on to other animal images. In many painted examples the birds are laid out in similar patterns. For the Inland Tlingits the bird is shown in a front view with its wings spread out to the sides and its head in profile, either looking to the left or the right. The details may be different but the bird's basic pattern is often shown in this manner. The Inland Tlingits rarely used a pure silhouette but painted their birds in the outlined style. The Athapaskans mostly created the animal images in silhouette. The Athapaskans' silhouette birds were sometimes painted in a realistic fashion. The Tahltan birds were at times a cross between the Inland Tlingit and Athapaskan image styles.

The following silhouette bird image is painted on a tunic and is in the collection of the Museum Weltkulturen in Mannheim. This is the only tunic that I have seen that has an image painted on it and is therefore very rare. The tunic was purchased from Arthur Speyer, by a German collector, Baron von Wrangel sometime between 1829 and 1830. Baron Ferdinand von Wrangel was born into a noble German family in Russia and was the chief administrator of Russian North America (Alaska) between 1829 and 1835. He was also the president of the Russian-American Company from 1840 until 1849. He would have been in an ideal position to collect artifacts from the region, including those that were collected from the interior by the middlemen, such as the Tanaina and the coastal Tlingits. The tunic passed through a number of hands before finally ending up in this present museum. It is listed on the museum's artifact card as Tanana but often is identified by others as Tanaina. This makes quite a difference since the Tanana live far into the interior of Alaska while the Tanaina live along the Pacific coast in south-central Alaska. I am not sure where the error started but I believe this tunic to be Tanaina. Based on my earlier regional breastband styles I examined in Chapter Three-Hid Clothing to Dance Shirts, this tunic is clearly done in the Tanaina style.

The bird design is painted in red ochre and the type of bird is unknown. The museum artifact card does not comment on it. Judy Thompson in her chapter *No Little Variety of Ornament* in *The Spirit Sings* says this about the bird: "The small bird motif painted with red ochre is an unusual feature and probably represents a clan symbol or spirit helper of the garment's wearer." (Glenbow Museum 1987: 152). See figure # 184 of the painted bird and figure # 185 for the breastband pattern. As you can see from the photograph there are three birds painted across the back of the tunic. There is also the common Athapaskan repeating dot motifs above and below the birds. While different in detail these birds do have the same look as the engraved Han bird in figure # 175 on page 193. Both are simple designs with raised outspread wings.

Figure #184, Painted birds on back of Tanaina tunic. Marion Jourdan photograph. Nr. 3219,Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin Abt. Kulturen der Welt.

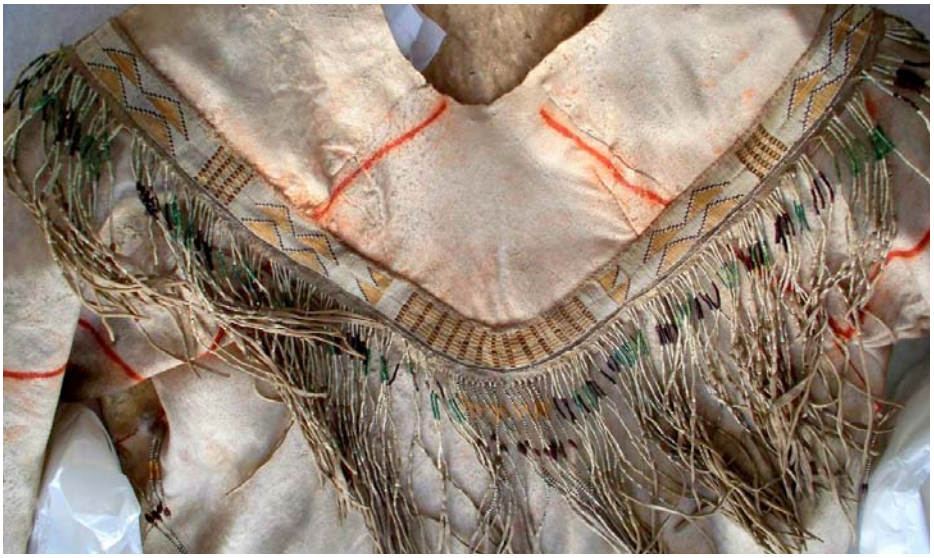


Figure #185, Breastband pattern on Tanana tunic. Marion Jourdan photograph. Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin Abt. Kulturen der Welt.

The next silhouette bird is painted on a drum and is in the Field Museum collection. See figure # 186. Note also the drum stick, figure #187, with a black head which may represent the raven.

Figure # 186. Raven painted on Yukon Athapaskan drum. Field Museum 2003.4161.337962.

Figure # 187. Raven painted on Yukon Athapaskan drum stick. Field Museum 2003.4161.338197.

This drum is painted with a red background and a typical black silhouette raven flying over the Yukon mountain ranges. Unfortunately there is little information about this drum other than that it was added to the collection in 2003 and is from the Yukon. Its general appearance makes me think that it was collected sometime between the 1940s and the 1970s. It is done in the typical Athapaskan style of painting ravens and there is no doubt that this is a Yukon painted drum in the earlier silhouette image style. As you can see in figures # 190 & 192, Athapaskans sometimes painted their images in scenes, like the scene above of the raven flying over the mountains. Later in Chapter Seven-Art of the Hunt & War I will show more Athapaskan scenes.

The image on a drum is part of the Burke Museum collection and was collected by George Emmons from the Tahltan people on the upper Stikine River in Northern British Columbia in 1909. See figure # 188 for a photograph of the drum and my drawing beside it for clarity. The drum was sealed in plastic and therefore I was not able to take a clear photograph of it. See figure # 189 for a photograph of the stick figure that is inside the drum. The card states: “Ceremonial dance drum of goat skin stretched over circular frame. The front is painted to represent a raven as it belonged in the family having the raven crest. On the inside are drawn some crude animal forms.”

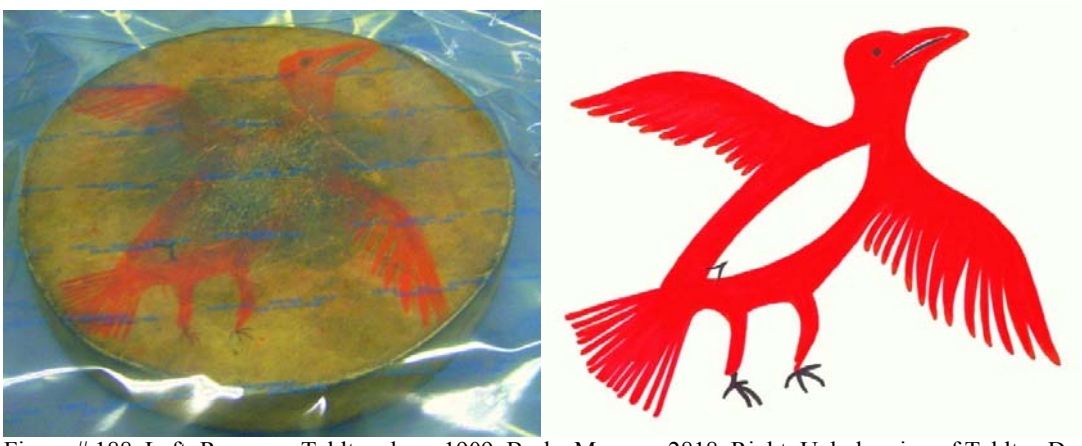


Figure # 188. Left: Raven on Tahltan drum 1909. Burke Museum 2818. Right: Uvk drawing of Tahltan Drum.

This drum was well used. The raven is painted in a solid red except for the center of the body which is left open. This image seems to be a cross between the more detailed Inland Tlingit birds and the solid painted Athapaskan birds. The Tahltan were greatly influenced by the coastal Tlingit, so it is understandable that this painted raven style has aspects from both the Tlingit and Athapaskan. A common feature between the two groups is that the wings have individual feathers. One of the differences is that this raven looks like it is in flight and there is a sense of movement which the Tlingit birds often lack. Many of the Tlingit birds are rendered in a manner like the bird crests of countries and states in Europe. Sometimes Athapaskan birds and other animals are rendered like crests but more often the birds and animals are made in a semi-realistic manner and show the bird in natural action: flying, sitting, watching, etc. Another notable difference is that on the Northwest Coast black was the colour of choice with red as a secondary colour. The interior native people preferred to paint images in red and use black as a secondary colour. Because of the plastic bag covering the drum I could not get any clear images of the "rude animal forms" from the inside of the drum. Below is a photograph of what appears to be a stick figure of a human.


Figure # 189. Stick figures inside Tahltan drum 1909. Burke Museum 2818.

The next image is more in the Athapaskan style, a solid coloured silhouette except for the red eyes of the animals and mouth of the raven. This raven is also painted on the inside of

the drum which, as I mentioned before, was not an uncommon practice. See figure # 190. The raven is sitting on a tree branch and watches animals, possibly caribou or moose, walk by. I do not know of a story referring to a like scene. It may have been something the artist observed and decided to paint. If this is the case, it would be one of the few images I have seen that is showing the raven as a realistic bird and not as the symbol of Crow. On the animal on the left is some red paint coming out of the rear end. Is this a mistake or is the artist showing that the animal is bleeding? If so is this a hunting scene? See figure # 191 for a detail of the possibly bleeding caribou or moose.

Figure #190. Raven and animal on Tahltan drum 1909. 2809, Burke Museum.

Figure #191. Detail of bleeding caribou or moose on Tahltan drum 1909. 2809, Burke Museum.

This is a good place to leave birds and look at other silhouetted painted animals. Again these animals are painted on drums. A well known drum that has animal designs painted on it is the potlatch drum used by Johnny Fraser, a Southern Tutchone man from Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. See figure # 192. Johnny Fraser was my first cousin, three times removed, and is now deceased. As I have seen no coloured photographs of this

drum, I cannot tell the medium or colour of the paint. The wolves are painted solid in this case and around the drum are a series of three heart shapes. Hearts shapes, which may be purely decorative, are also common in beaded designs. See figure # 233 on page 232 where the heart is incorporated as the body of an eagle. At the top part of the drum is an unknown shape. The exact location of this drum is unknown. Johnny Fraser sold a lot of his First Nation possessions to tourists, many of which were Americans. It is generally believed by many that this drum is in a private collection in the United States.

Figure # 192, Left: MacBride Museum Photograph with detail of drum 95.345.

There are other photographs of this drum used at potlatches and so the painted wolves would represent the Wolf clan. McClellan also notes this idea about drums in the Southern Yukon in *My Old People Say*:

> Often the heads are decorated with crest animals or representations of shamanistic spirits. Ideally the painting should be done by one of the opposite moiety. (McClellan 2001: 295).

This drum will show up later in figure # 326 on page 311 as it has been photographed a number of times.

In the final silhouette figure, # 193, Chief Isaac of Moosehide is holding a painted drum. This painted design appears to be a moose. The photograph was taken in the 1920s and the person to the left of Chief Isaac is Bishop Isaac Stringer. I have added my drawing beside the photograph for clarity.

Figure # 193, Chief Isaac and his drum. 990-77.12, DCM&HS.

The following is what is written about the drum from the website *Chief Isaac's People of the River*:

> Chief Isaac's drum was made for him by his brother Walter Ben. Drum design shape like a moose and burnt into the hide came from the Dawson slide. A story about how the slide was formed was told to Trica by Auntie Pat Lindgren. "Many years ago, before the white man came into this country, people of the Han tribe lived at the mouth of the Klondike, where the present city of Dawson is situated. Sometimes a member of the tribe would go missing, and it was said another Indian tribe, from the South, was stealing them. One day members of the Han tribe were at the very top of the hillside at the north end of Dawson, and the other tribe was at the foot of the hill. They were fighting and someone at the top cut down a tree and this started a slide. The rock slide buried and killed all the members of the tribe from the south.
> Chief Isaac, heredity chief of the Han tribe, proudly displayed a drawing of the slide of Dawson on his drum because the symbol that shapes like a moose are signs of the land set there for his people of the Han tribe to live and to remember." Joy Isaac (http://www.chiefisaac.com/stories.html#Chief_Isaacs_Drum_and_the_Dawson_Slide)

In figure #194 is my drawing of another moose design that is on a drum in the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre of the Dawson Han Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. In this image the moose is based on Chief Isaac's drum but there are differences. In figure # 193 Chief Isaac's painted moose drum is facing to the left in as it is in all the photographs of the moose I have seen. The Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre's drum is facing to the right. Also, the center negative shape in Chief Isaac's drum is empty but the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre drum has a painted shape inside of the negative space. Dänojà Zho's drum has a black outline while Chief Isaac's drum

does not appear to have one. The Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre drum may be a later copy of Chief Isaac's drum, or is an additional drum made by Walter Ben.

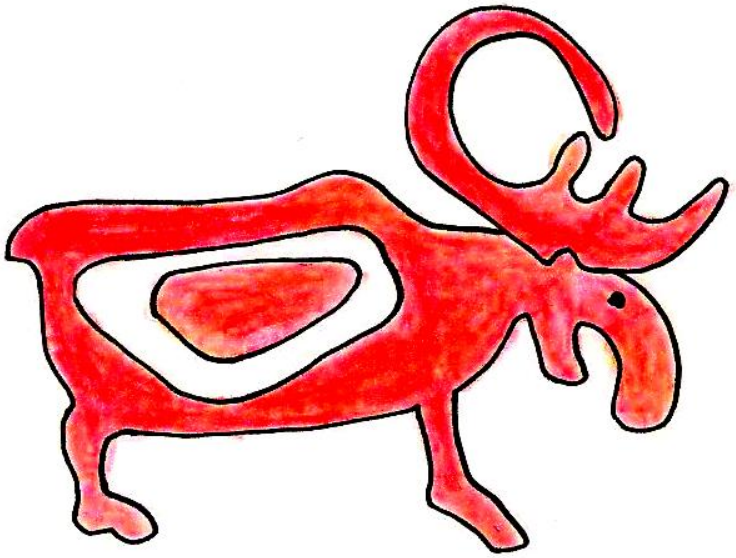


Figure # 194, detail of drum at Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre, Dawson City. UvK Drawing.

The earlier Tahltan bird in figure # 188 on page 202 was also done in red, had a black dot as an eye and had a negative space in the middle of its body. These examples are a cross between the pure silhouette images and the outlines images.

Later I give other examples of stick figures, silhouette figures, outlined figures and figures that combine these styles. I will point them out as they occur.

Carved images

Athapaskans had a carving figurative tradition and I will present a cross section of examples. The first set of carved figures I am showing are either amulets for shaman's or other people's personal rituals. Next I will look at some carved fish figures followed by carved spoons and beaver images. I will finish with larger carved figures that are either trail markers or boundary markers. You will see other carved artifacts in later chapters where the purpose of the figure is known.

The first figure is a simple Ahtna stone human figure that is in the Alaska State Museum collection in Juneau. It was collected from the Copper River in Alaska. See figure # 195 below.

Figure # 195. Ahtna human stone figure. II-C-13. ASM.

The writing on the figure states "Amulet from an old deserted cabin on the Copper River, near Tumsina presented by Dr. Henry Cockerille of Valdez." This is a simple figure but you can see a body and head. I believe this to be an amulet as well. It's an object that fits in the hand. The writing on the amulet is on the front as there appears to what may be a mouth and eyes on the head.

The two next figures were collected together from the headwaters of the Chilkat River in the southern part of Southern Tutchone territory. The first example is in figure # 196. This item was collected in 1901 by C.F. Newcombe. On the catalogue card is stated the following about this figure and others that were collected by Newcombe:

> "The others are from tribes about headwaters of Chilkat River, probably included in Father Morice's Tsekehne. I got them from friends who were unable to further specify them, in 1901."

This artifact is in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection and is listed as a Bone Charm. It is approximately 3.5 inches high (9 cm) and is carved out of bone. Even though the Chilkat River flows into the Pacific Ocean through Chilkat Tlingit territory, this human figure is nothing like the typical Tlingit carving from the coastal areas. It is made in an Athapaskan style, in this case a cruder form of carving.


Figure # 196, small carved bone charm. VI-Q-116, CMC.

C.F. Newcombe collected another bone charm with the same provenance and collection data. See figure # 197 for two views of this animal. This carved animal or creature is similar to the carved animal in figure # 195 that was collected at Fort Selkirk, Yukon, in the 1950s. An interesting point is that the head of this charm looks like the head on the copper knife from Aishihik in figure # 287 on page 283. The Elders I consulted could not be sure of this animal. A frog was put forward as a possibility, but the tail seemed to dispute that choice.


Figure # 197. VI-Q-115, CMC.

In the Canadian Museum of Civilization there is an artifact that was assumed to be found at Fort Selkirk in the 1950s that is also lizard like. The precise location has not been

listed but it was collected during an archaeological survey conducted in the southwestern Yukon in 1957 by Richard S. MacNeish. See Figure # 198 for a photograph of the artifact from the side and top. The function of this artifact is unknown. Ruth Gotthardt, the Yukon Government archaeologist, suggested that it may be part of a speaker's staff. When I held the artifact it fitted in my hand nicely; I was of the impression that it may have been used by a shaman as one of his pendants. He could have held it easily while performing his rituals. Marge Jackson thought it could be used in dance. The item does have the common dot and circle motif with an unusual carved animal at the side. A fox was my first thought but it is wise not to discount the animals from Yukon's past, like the giant beavers. Southern Tutchone Elder Irene Smith suggested that it looked like an otter. When I mentioned to Irene that the otter is generally thought of as being a very bad animal and you have to be careful when dealing with them, she replied: "Not to everybody." If this is an otter, it may be a personal animal spirit guide for either a regular person or shaman. I thought the evil power of the otter did not make this a good choice yet in figure # 199 is a bone carving that is listed to be a land otter from the Jackson Sheldon Museum.

Figure # 198, paddle shaped object recovered from Fort Selkirk. KeKe-1:1, CMC.

Note that both these animals have legs and big eyes. There are many animals carved in bone in this general layout which are similar to the animals in figure # 198 and # 199. For example the coastal Tlingit often carved animals, such as the sea otter, with a similar outline.

Figure # 199. Shaman's otter baton, I.A. 105, Sheldon Jackson Museum.

The otter above is at the Sheldon Jackson Museum and may have been donated by R.A. Clarke along with other articles. In the museum notes it states that it is a "Shaman's baton" and that it is a "shaman's bone to be thrown, medium, Lizard form, bone, 14". The notes also state: "A remarkably fine piece; the land otter is a powerful shaman's spirit." This otter looks very close to the two examples above but in this case you can see the coastal Tlingit art style with the eyes and face at the bottom back of the otter's body. It seems that the two groups of people, interior and coastal, were making similar versions of these animals and reflected them in their own style. The museum notes also mentioned "Lizard form" and this cannot be discounted. I want to add that Dr. Leslie Johnson, an Associate Professor in Anthropology at Athabasca University, noted that this animal looked like the salamanders or newts that are found on the Taku and Skeena Rivers and have been reported as far north as Glacier Bay. These amphibians are mainly active at night and hibernate most of the year. Have these animals been seen at the headwaters of the Chilkat River area, and if so, what is their relationship with First Nations people in that area?

There are a number of similar looking artifacts in the various Tlingit collections of museums, especially with the Yakutat Tlingits, so this style of carving was not uncommon. Note that the Yakutat Tlingits were originally Athapaskans who moved from the interior Copper River areas to the coast and adopted the Tlingit language and culture. The Yakutat Tlingit have many bone carvings in this style, often placed in shaman's necklace rings. See figure # 200. Whatever the case, these are recorded as charms and if used by shamans, maybe the natural habit of the animal made them important. Salamanders often only came out in rain and at night. Both salamanders and otters can live in the water and land and may therefore represent a transformation power. They were able to function at night and the night was considered to be a time the spirits were most active, since night was the spirit's day. Since shamans dealt with transformations from human to animal spirits and back again, maybe those animals represented that ability, since they are moving at ease between the land and water and thus between two different worlds.

Figure # 200. Shaman's neck ring, listed as Tlingit, collected from Copper River. IVA 6528 Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

One point to be considered is the commercial value of the otter pelts to the coastal Tlingit people. Whatever the beliefs toward otters, they quickly became commercial once the pelts were in great demand by the traders. There was such a demand that the sea otters were all but wiped out. In this context carved otters might make reference to a very important trade animal.

Another common carved animal figure is the fish. In the Royal Ontario Museum collection one can find a unique and beautiful spoon with a fish design on it. See figure # 201 for the spoon and detail of the fish. This spoon is part of the D.A. Cameron collection and is from the Dawson City area. The spoon has a fish designed on what appears to be a piece of copper at the end of the handle. At first glance this spoon looks like a Northwest Coast Indian art piece, but at closer examination it is more clearly of an interior source. The design uses an outlined style of the fish, rather than the Northwest Coast Indian style with ovoid and "U" shapes. Instead, the artist used lines for the body and a series of dashes to represent the scales. On the handle just in front of the salmon are two circles. They appear to be made of inlaid abalone and would have been traded in from the coast. Abalone shells were highly prized and sought after in past times. The First Nations from the Dawson Area are the Hän, which means river. The Hän are well known for their fishing and it is not surprising to see a spoon with a fish design on it. This looks like a salmon that would be harvested in the late summer from the various fish camps along the river.

Figure # 201. Han spoon and detail of fish. 953-160-10, ROM

The next fish is a scratcher from the Burke Museum in Seattle, Washington. See figure # 202 for a photograph of the fish in relation to the other scratchers and figure # 203 for a photograph of the fish by itself. These were collected by George Emmons from the Chilkat Tlingits and were accessioned at the Burke Museum in 1909. They were traded in from the interior, most likely from the Southern Tutchone people. The museum notes state:

> Bone scratcher, ornamentally shaped and cut. From Chilkat, but procured in trade from the interior people living about the head waters of the Alsek river. Worn suspended around the neck and used to scratch with, the nails never being used.

Scratchers are generally about four inches long close to the coastal areas and five or six inches long in other areas of the Yukon. They were used by both the interior and coastal Tlingit people but it seems that the coastal Tlingit used scratchers more often. For the Kaska the scratcher was used on the head because if you used your fingernails it could result in the loss of hair. The use of the scratcher replaced the fingernails for the coastal Tlingit because to scratch with fingernails was considered harmful to the person. For example, if a woman's husband was away at war and the woman scratched herself with her fingernails, there was a chance that her husband would be wounded at that spot by either an arrow or other weapon.

The scratcher also resembled the shaman's amulets and the owner may have felt that the scratcher offered a certain amount of protection. Since the scratchers are about the same size and designs as shaman pendants they would be hard to tell apart and could be easily misidentified. I wonder why the artist decided to carve a scratcher in the shape of a fish which is very different from the other geometric designed scratchers. Was there more meaning to this scratcher? This size of scratcher is also about the same size as carved bone fish that some archaeologist identify as fishing lure.

Figure #202. Bone carved fish scratcher. # 42, Catalog ID 1020, 1018, 1017, 1019. Burke Museum.


Figure # 203. Bone carved fish scratcher. # 42, 1020. Burke Museum.

This next example is of a carved fish, which does not have a hole for a string in its tail, like the previous fish. The hole is at the center of the fish's back. See figure # 204. This is an artifact that was discovered at the Klo-kut site just north of present day Old Crow and is in the Gwich'in traditional territories. It is about 1200 years old and is presently in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection. While the archaeologists say it was probably used as a lure, it very well may have been used as a scratcher or amulet. I will mention later in Chapter Six-Ritual, Shaman Art & Story Related Art that Athapaskan girls used scratchers during their puberty seclusion. The scratcher was part of the ritual items the young woman had, along with a swan leg bone drinking tube, raven feathers, family stones, puberty hoods and so forth. See figure # 248 on page 243 for additional images of scratchers.

Figure # 204. Cast of bone fish. Government of Yukon photograph.

There are other animal images carved on spoons. The following example is of a spoon from the MacBride Museum collection. In figure # 205 is a carved animal figure in a wooden spoon. There is little information on this spoon, but it appears that the figure is of a large eared animal. Is it a fox? One of the Elders felt it may be a coyote or a sheep. The carving is basic and without the stylization that is found on the coast. Its presentation does not allow us to be sure of the type of animal. I think this is another example of the artist's freedom of expression. We would have to know the artist and the intent in order to understand it. Note the repeating dot motif above the head. These points are very much in the style of the interior Yukon First Nations people.

Figure # 205. Wood face spoon. 1973.1.153, MacBride Museum.

The next spoon (#206) is from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Museum of the North. It was collected from Nenana Minto areas in central Alaska and this is the western most part of Tanana territory. Nenana is located 88 road kilometers west of Fairbanks while Minto is north of Nenana and has no road access. The spoon was a bequest from Katherine

Gust in 1986. She had lived in Alaska for over 30 years. This wooden spoon is rendered in a realistic fashion and there is no doubt that a beaver is carved on the handle.

Figure # 206. Beaver carved on Tanana spoon handle. UA86-13-14, University of Alaska Museum of the North

In the Field Museum there is a double tailed beaver necklace that looks very much like the one in a photograph of Mrs. Angela Sidney. See figure # 207 of the beaver in the Field Museum and figure # 208 of the photograph that was taken by Mr. Jim Robb in 1988. It shows Mrs. Sidney wearing a double-limbed beaver necklace. The split tail beaver represents Mrs. Angela Sidney's Deisheetaan or Decitan Beaver crest which comes under the Crow moiety. But note that in Yakutat, Alaska, the Beaver crest comes under the Wolf Moiety. This illustrates the complexities of the clan system and ownerships.

While the two look very much alike, they are different in detail. There is no information about the Field Museum's doubled limbed beaver but Mr. Robb says that the beaver Mrs. Sydney is wearing was carved by a non-First Nations carver named Steve Anderson, who at the time of this writing is in his fifties. Anderson had carved this beaver sometime before Mr. Robb took the photograph. He had no further information other than that Mr. Anderson is a northern carver. I have so far not been unable to book an interview with Mr. Anderson and therefore do not know where he got the details of the design. I do know that well known Yukon artist Lilias Farley (1907-1980) had copied the dance shirt with the double limbed beaver on it and it was part of a large Yukon art scene on a metal medium that she created. The large piece of artwork was placed on public display in the Federal Building in Whitehorse. When the new Federal Building, the Elijah Smith building was built in 1989 the art work was transferred there. On a side note; the building was named after my great-uncle who was a key figure in starting the Yukon First Nations Land Claims process. This is one of only a couple of examples of First Nations style art on permanent display in Whitehorse that is not in the Northwest Coast Indian art style, but those examples were created by white artists. Therefore there are no examples of traditional Yukon First Nations art on permanent display in Whitehorse.

Did Anderson copy an earlier carved example such as the one in the Field Museum or was it carved based on other double-limbed beaver examples that are on Inland Tlingit dance shirts. Perhaps Anderson got the design from Lilias Farley?

The overall shape of the beaver and what appears to be the inner working of the beaver are evident on both the carvings and in the dance shirt image that I drew in figure # 209. This design can be seen in *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* on page 180. The photograph is of Jake Jackson wearing his Split-Beaver dance shirt at Teslin in 1951. For my drawing of the Split-Beaver I had to guess the colours, based on the tone of grey in the black and white photographs. While I cannot make firm conclusions from the photograph it appears that this beaver is created with mostly fabric. The design is made up of geometric patterns and the upper body appears to have a series of ribs. There are two white lines going from the

upper legs to what appear to be lungs. The white lines from the double hind legs also lead into the bottom. Is this the stomach or are they reproductive organs? The head seems to have two 'U' shaped ears and two small circles for eyes. The nose is recognizable but the white circle in the middle of the head is not. Does this represent the brain?

Figure # 207, Double limbed beaver. 2003.4161.338208. Field Museum.

Figure # 208, Angela Sidney wearing the Double Limbed Beaver. Photograph courtesy of Mr. Jim Robb.

Figure # 209, UvK drawing of Double Limbed Beaver from Jake Jackson's dance shirt.

The story of the double-limbed beaver can be read in *My Old People Say* starting on page 471. In the story the double-limbed beaver is described as having a man's face with a red copper mustache and the eyes and eyebrows were gold coloured. The body had two front and hind legs each and a double tail. This description differs from the images of the double-limbed beavers. The faces do not look human and the front legs are always a single leg. I have no explanation for these differences.

In the story, the man that caught the double-limbed beaver was a Pelly River Athapaskan named Nøts. He was helped by Wolverine who also was Athapaskan speaking. These events took place at a lake called Old Rock which is located on the north side of Three Aces Mountain (Dawson Peaks) in the Teslin area. Basically, Nøts was unsuccessful trapping beaver. He had been out for two weeks and caught nothing. He was also starving. In a dream Wolverine came to him and told him where to set his net. Nøts did that and Wolverine also came to help him. After he set the net Nøts caught a double-limbed beaver and talked to it asking for help. Nøts then let the beaver go and after that he had good luck in catching beavers. Nøts then went on to other adventures with porcupines and mice. The person telling the story said these events happened in his grandfather's time (1800s) and yet in the story it is clearly during the myth time. The animals and people speak the same language and time acted differently than we know it now. In any case the Teslin Inland Tlingits claim that the coastal Beaver Clan holds the double-limbed beaver in high regard.

Figure # 210. D. Leechman photograph, 1948. J2388, CMC

The following is my drawing of another double-limbed beaver from an Inland Tlingit dance shirt. These images are from a photograph taken by D. Leechman and are shown above in figure # 210. In the photograph are four people, from left to right; Marjorie, Jake, Dorothy and Harry Jackson in Teslin, Yukon. Jake Jackson has a double-limbed beaver design on his dance shirt. The design is done like the killer whales on Dorothy's shirt, that is, two beavers placed across from each other on the upper part of the dance shirt. The second beaver is on young Harry Jackson's dance shirt which I will examine later in figure # 217. In plate XIIIc is another photograph of Jake Jackson wearing his double-limbed beaver dance shirt. See my drawing of the double-limbed beaver from plate XIIIc in figure # 211. The creator of this beaver used a lot of geometric patterns and is quite different from the other dance shirt beaver renderings.

Figure # 211, UvK drawing of geometric Double Limbed Beaver from Inland Tlingit dance shirts.

I will now return to carved figures. Other items that have been carved are either trail markers or boundary markers. These could be the Southern Tutchone equivalent of the Tlingit trail and boundary markers. Elders remember seeing these markers in the areas close to the coastal Tlingit territory but I have not heard of these carved posts in other areas of the south-central Yukon. The following figure is on a post from the Klukshu Museum in Klukshu in the southern Yukon. See figure # 212. This is a fairly crude carving of a face.

Figure # 212, marker post. Klukshu Museum.

Below is another carved face in a tree located in Southern Tutchone territory. It is carved in the same manner as the first post. See figure # 213. I have sketched this marker from a photograph provided by the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. This marker is still located in its original spot in Southern Tutchone traditional territory.

Figure # 213 Southern Tutchone tree carving. UvK drawing.

The style of these carvings is quite different from the Chilkat Tlingit's trail markers or boundary markers. In figure # 214 is an example of a Tlingit boundary marker. This carved marker belongs to the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation and is on loan to the Kluane National Park Interpretive Centre in Haines Junction.

Figure # 214, Tlingit boundary marker. CAFN Collection.

There are carved examples that were not light and transportable and were not used as trail or boundary markers. These carved works are intended as more permanent sculptures and do not have the amulet function like the smaller Yukon carvings discussed above. In Chapter Six-Art of Rituals, Shamans and Stories I will be looking at story related carvings from just before the mid twentieth century. In the final chapter of the Current Period I will examine carvings from the mid twentieth century and onwards that were carved for the tourist trade.

Beaded & button figurative designs

The biggest and most striking beaded and button figurative images were created by the Inland Tlingits who placed these images on their dance shirts. These were mainly a means of representing their clans. The Inland Tlingits also created smaller figurative images on moccasins, gloves, bags, etc. The Athapaskans also created a number of beaded figurative images on smaller items but rarely on the same scale as the Inland Tlingits. In this section I will be looking at a number of dance shirts as well as the smaller moccasins, gloves, bags, etc. that show figurative images.

The first figurative image is a human figure that is on a dance shirt in a potlatch photograph from the Robert Ward fonds at Yukon Archives. This may mean that the image

was taken in the Carcross-Atlin area. The human figure appears to have been created by the use of various size buttons. The outline is white on a dark background. In my drawing I used a dark outline on a white background, reversing the tones of the image. See figure # 215 for the drawing of the dance shirt and figure # 216 for the photograph of the same shirt.

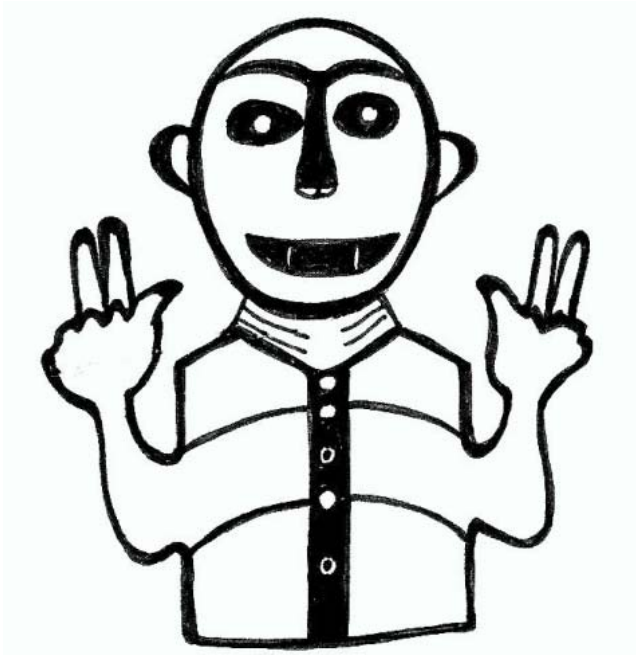


Figure # 215, human figure on Tlingit dance shirt. Uvk Drawing.

Figure # 216, Human figure on dance shirt. YA # 8845.

There are several comments to make about this image. First, human images created by beads or buttons are quite rare. Second, the figure is smiling and has the commonly recurring lines across his chest, but not as many as in other figurative examples. There are only two lines that I can make out that run across the chest. There is a line down the centre of his chest. While lines across and down the chest are common, I wonder if these lines are different, perhaps indicating a tunic or shirt. Another interesting detail is how the figure is holding his hands up and palms out. He appears to hold two fingers up in the same type of gesture that Jesus is shown in many classical paintings. I do not know the reasoning for the hand gestures.

The facial expression shows a happy fellow, as many of the Inland Tlingit humans are rendered. I know of no clans that are represented by human figures. While some deities such as Crow and Beaverman can take human form they are always shown in their animal form. Is this an exception to that practice? Does this image represent a person? I am unfortunately left in the dark as to the reasoning for this image and its place of prominence on the dance shirt.

Water animals

In the photograph, figure # 216, a man standing on the right is wearing a dance shirt that has a beaver image on it. This appears to be the same dance shirt as young Harry Jackson is wearing in figure # 210 on page 217. It is also the same shirt that Mary Jackson wears in a photograph taken in 1951 in *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* on page 183. The photograph is shown in plate XIIIc of *My Old People Say.* It appears that this dance shirt had been passed on to different people in the Jackson family over the decades. While the beaver design looks identical, in the photograph of Harry and Mary's dance shirt the epaulettes and the cuffs appear to be different in the two shirts. Either the photograph has distorted the appearance, since Harry is quite young and the dance shirt is too big for him, or these are two different dance shirts made by the same person. The beaver on the dance shirt is presented in the typical 'crest' style and appears to be created from buttons. See my drawing of the beaver in figure # 217.

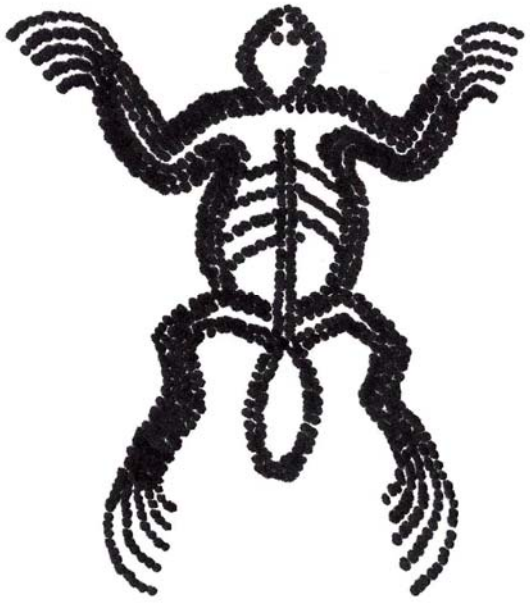


Figure # 217, UvK drawing of beaver from Jackson family dance shirts.

In my drawing I have reversed the black and white of the buttons and background. In this beaver we see the usual line going down the center of the body with a series of 'ribs' coming off that center line. There are four ribs on the left side of the beaver and three on the right side. It looks like the fourth rib on that side was started but never finished. Or was it intended to be unfinished? Maybe the buttons came off at some time and the buttons were never replaced. I wonder if the beaver was removed from one shirt and placed on the other or

if the two identical beavers were made on two shirts. The claws are unusually large compared to the rest of the animal. This might be determined by the material.

In another dance shirt there is a different approach to representing the beaver image and this is on Chief Joe Squan's dance shirt. An example can be seen in *Their Own Yukon* on page 134. The beaver is in profile and seems to show the animal's spine as well as its ribs. See figure # 218 of my drawing

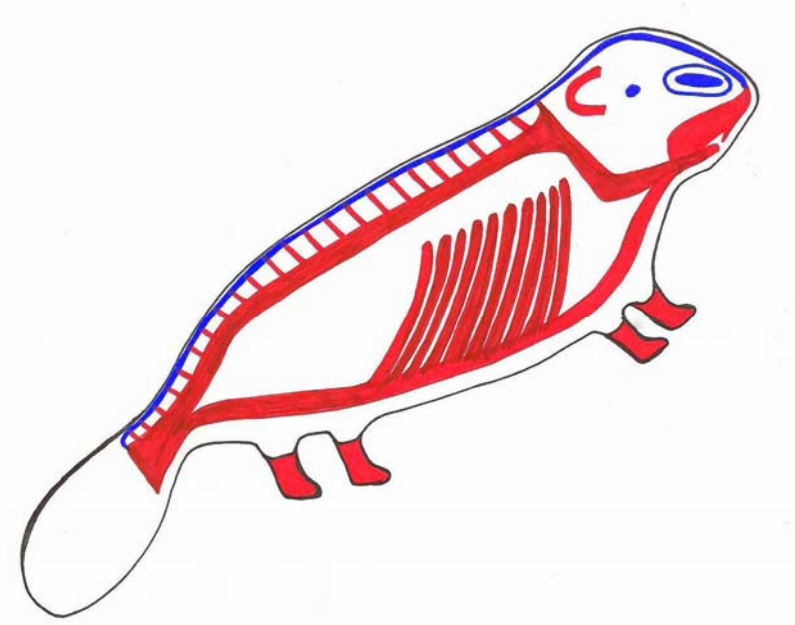


Figure # 218, UvK drawing of button profile beaver from Inland Tlingit dance shirts.

What I find interesting about this beaver is that it does not have the typical line going through the center of the body as in the next two killer whales in figures # 219 & # 220. What appears to be the spine follows the curve of the back but the ribs do not extend from that line but start from the bottom of the body and curve up. The ribs stop before reaching the spine line. Is there a reason for this approach or is it an individual artistic preference.

I will return to an earlier image. In figure # 219 is my drawing of the killer whale that is on the dance shirt of the woman who is standing behind Patsy Henderson in figure # 177 on page 194.

The killer whale on the woman's coat is more complex than the drawn fish on Mr. Henderson's drum. In most cases the beaded animals have more complex designs than the drawn or engraved animals. I believe this has to do with the ability to create a larger image on dance shirts, allowing for more detail. The killer whales are rendered in profile and are facing each other. Putting the killer whales or fish and other animals in profile, and having these two on a dance shirt or coat, was common practice for the Tagish and Inland Tlingit people.

Figure # 219, Killer Whale image on woman's dance coat Carcross, 1947. UvK drawing.

The teeth and the circle in the dorsal fin indicate this image to be a killer whale and it is placed on the shirt to represent the owner as a member of the Tagish Killer Whale clan of the Wolf Moiety. This killer whale has a line going down the center of its body with an alternating series of lines coming from this line to the outside of the body. I drew these images from black and white photographs and I assumed the colours based on tone. This is also the case with the next example. Another killer whale is shown in the same photographs as the beaver in figure # 210; the 1951 photograph in *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* on page 183 and plate XIIIc of *My Old People Say.* See figure # 220.

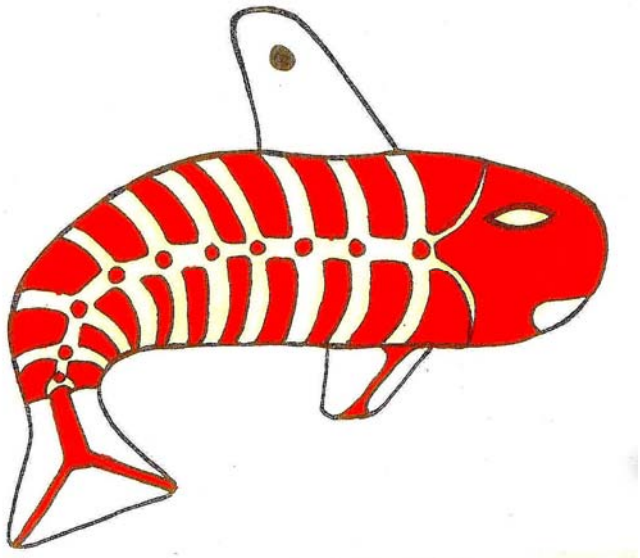


Figure # 220, Killer Whale image on Annie Geddes's dance shirt, Teslin, 1951. UvK drawing.

This killer whale on Annie Geddes's dance shirt looks similar to Dorothy Jackson's dance shirt in figure # 210 on page 217. However, there appear to be some differences which may be due to the quality of the photographs and size differences of the wearers. The killer whales in figure # 219 and # 220 are both part of a pair that is placed on the garment, but in figure # 177 they are facing each other and the killer whales on Annie Geddes dance shirt are facing away from each other.

Furthermore, the ribs in Geddes' killer whale are leading off the center line in the typical Inland Tlingit manner with a series of dots where the ribs meet. In the case of the killer whale in figure # 219 there is a center line with dots but the ribs are not lining up. Next, in figure # 219 the whale has teeth while Geddes's has not. Both have the circle in the dorsal fin. Geddes's killer whale is done in mostly one colour with a dark colour for the circle on the dorsal fin while the killer whale in figure # 219 seems to be completed in more colours and has more details.

I suspect, since the killer whale in figure # 219 is on the jacket of a woman who is with Patsy Henderson in figure # 177, that she is Tagish. The killer whale of Annie Geddes is an Inland Tlingit killer whale. Both people do not live on the coast but in the interior. The use of killer whales as crests for interior people may seem unusual. Based on my understanding of the Inland Tlingit moieties, clans and sibs, the Killer Whale clan of the Inland Tlingit resulted from the Tlingit moving inland. So the Inland Tlingit Killer Whale clan has direct links with the coastal Tlingits. The Killer Whale clan is part of the Wolf moiety.

The Tagish Killer Whale claim comes about differently with the story about the first man to carve the killer whale. In the Tagish as well as Southern Tutchone stories a man marries a coastal Tlingit woman. He is from somewhere in the interior, either Rancheria River (for the Tagish version) or Upper Alsek River area (Southern Tutchone version) and his four or five brother in laws do not like him. They take him to an island and leave him to starve to death. While he is there he gets very depressed but then he hears singing from under the water. Curious, he goes under the water to an underwater village, but it is like our world. It is a city of sea animals that look like people. This is a typical case of people travelling from one world to another. Once there he goes to a big house and there are people and a doctor trying to heal a sick man. The interior man is able to cure the man and as payment is given a large section of gut where he can crawl inside. Once inside the gut he can be transported anywhere he likes. He first goes to his house only to retrieve a tool kit and then returns to the island where he was first left to starve. There he carves out the first two killer whales and once they are put in the water they come to life and grow in size. He orders the killer whales to kill the brother in laws when they come back to the island to check to see if he has died yet. Once the killer whales kill the brother in law the interior man returns to his wife via the magical gut and tells the killer whales not to kill any more people unless they have to. In the Tagish version he tells the killer whales to rid the sea of all the bad snakes and creatures that eat people and thus makes the sea safe for people to travel on.

Since this man is Tagish from the interior, the Tagish claim the Killer Whale crest as their own. Interestingly, according to McClellan in *My Old People Say,* some Tagish say that the Inland Tlingit do not own the Killer Whale clan. Regardless of the ownership of the crest the Tagish at times display the killer whale on their dancing shirts and button blankets and claim it to be their own. The Inland Tlingit do the same but through their clan lineage with the coastal Tlingits.

While the Inland Tlingit and Tagish have the Killer Whale clan the rest of Yukon Athapaskans do not. However, Athapaskans did make beaded fish images. The following image is a beaded salmon from the Klukshu Museum. Since Klukshu is a salmon fishing camp, this only makes sense. The only information I received about this salmon is that it was beaded a 'long' time ago and that it is from Klukshu. It does have the word 'salmon' beaded on it so it may indicate that it was beaded after World War II when the Haines road was built by the United States Army. This made Klukshu more accessible to the outside world and thus the tourism market. You will notice that the fish is done with an outline of beads and a series of dashes in the typical interior Yukon style of rendering fish images. See figure # 221.

Figure # 221. Beaded fish, Klukshu Museum.

I will carry on with the theme of water animals and look at a Tahltan frog design that is on a cartridge belt. This belt is in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection and was purchased by James Teit in 1915 for $14.00. This belt is also shown in Judy Thompson's *Recording their Story: James Teit and the Tahltan* on page 157. In the book's caption is written:

> Cartridge belt of green cloth, etc. Beaded with leaf designs all over the flap and straps and beaded image of toad (a crest of the Raven phratry). Wooden button. Tahltan. Largely ceremonial, or part of full or fancy dress. (Thompson 207: 156)

It also states that Teit purchased the belt from Jenny Martin on October 1st. See below in figure # 222.


Figure # 222. Beaded toad on Tahltan cartridge belt. Purchased 1915. VI-O-40, CMC.

The belt layout is typical of Athapaskan cartridge belts with a neck strap and cartridge flap to cover and protect the bullets. See the Tutchone cartridge belts in figure # 132 on page 155 and the cartridge belt that is above the octopus bags in figure # 133 on page 156. The beadwork design is a series of stem works with different leafs for the cartridge flap and strap.

Beaded bird designs

Both the Inland Tlingits and Athapaskans created beaded bird designs. There are a number of different designs, the most common Crow or eagles and maybe seagulls. The next example is what I consider a Yukon First Nations beading masterpiece. It was owned and possibly made by the famous Tagish woman Kate Carmack. She was married to a white man, George Carmacks, one of the discoverers of gold that started the Klondike Gold Rush. This cape was done in the Athapaskan style. Even though the Tagish adopted many Tlingit cultural identifiers, the Tagish belonged to the Athapaskan group and bordered the Southern Tutchone. On Kate Carmack's cape are various designs and the first one I will look at is a white bird. See figure # 223 for the cape and figure # 224 for the white bird.

Front Back

Figure # 223, Kate Carmack's cape. 72.1.80, MacBride Museum.

Figure # 224. 72.1.80, MacBride Museum.

I am not sure if the bird in figure # 224 is a swan or a seagull. It may even be another bird. The Elders I showed the photos to could not clarify it for me either. Since designs are so individual you often have to guess what the beader was intending to make. For Elders, knowledge is very important. When showing them pictures, they would often say: "if you don't know, you can't say". In other words, unless you know the information for sure, it is better not to comment. There is no guess work. Despite my understanding and respect for this, in this thesis I feel I should present my ideas. In this case, I think it may be a swan even if there has yet to be a bird image identified positively as a swan. I can argue this because of the importance swans had in First Nations spiritualism. The use of swan down, feathers and other body parts by southern Yukon First Nations is well documented. Swan down and feathers were used in ceremony, ritual and decoration.

Swan breasts were used for fancy dance hats and the wings were also used in those dances. Swan down was used by women who would blow the down into the air, praying for an easy childbirth, or by hunters leaving down at special places, praying for successful hunts. It is interesting that the use of swans by shamans comes up in stories. One example is John Dickson's story *The Girl Who Lived with Salmon* that was recorded in *Dene Gudeji* on page 3. In this story the girl is taken by the Salmon people and a shaman uses the powers in the swan feathers to transform the salmon back into the child. Swans are mentioned several times in *My Old People Say* and seem to hold special powers for the benefit of people. My second guess is the seagull, for the possible symbolism to trade. I have mentioned this earlier when I discussed the speaker's staff at the MacBride Museum.

Another bird, again on Kate Carmack's cape, is black with white wings. Is it a raven or a magpie? See figure # 225. There are lots of obvious reasons to create a raven, but the bird does look like a magpie. I have not come across any mention of magpies in my research. However, the magpie could be a wearer's personal spirit guide.

Figure # 225. 72.1.80, MacBride Museum.

There were a number of other beaded motifs that were unidentifiable. On Kate Carmacks' cape there is also an insect type motif. Is it a spiritual being? A bird? A flying insect? Ingrid Johnson felt this was a beaver based on the stylized tail. See figure # 226.


Figure # 226. 72.1.80, MacBride Museum.

The next image is also interesting, another unknown motif. See figure # 227. Ingrid Johnson lists the figures on the cape as:

> Geometric designs at both sides of the opening. Center back panel contains bird figures, leaf designs, anthropoid figures, frog designs. Lower edge consists of leaf and floral designs, some serially joined. (Johnson 1994: Appendix B, 4)

I asked Ms. Johnson which design was the frog and why she felt this was indeed a frog. The frog played an important role for Kate's brother, Skookum Jim, in his discovery of the gold. Johnson stated that, based on the shape, it felt like a frog. The frog was at the bottom of the panel.


Figure # 227. 72.1.80, MacBride Museum.

In the Anchorage Museum there is a beautiful sled bag that is done in the typical Upper Yukon River style. The design incorporates what appears to be grouse in the bead patterns. See figure # 228 of the bag and figure # 229 of a detail of the birds.

Figure # 228. Upper Yukon Valley Athapaskan sled bag. 2001.24.1, Anchorage Museum.

Figure # 229. Upper Yukon Valley Athapaskan sled bag. 2001.24.1, Anchorage Museum.

Note the typical Upper Yukon style of adding the outcrops in the stems works. I mentioned earlier in Chapter Four-Beaded and Floral Designs that the Alaska Athapaskans told me that the outcrops represented grouse tracks. This is a perfect illustration of the grouse making those tracks. The didactic panel, part of a series on Athapaskan bead styles, states:

> Also heavily decorated was the sled bag, tied between the sled's handle bars in front of the sled driver. The sled bag contained objects needed often on the trail, like matches, food, and extra mittens. The style of beaded decoration indicates that it was made in the Yukon Valley in the border area between Alaska and the Canadian Yukon Territory. (2001.24.1, Anchorage Museum.)

The last comment makes it likely a Han sled bag. The Tanana and Northern Tutchone could be possible contenders.

While the Inland Tlingit had the Eagle as one of their moieties, the Athapaskan groups did not. They did however create eagle images. The Southern Tutchone sometimes included eagle designs on clothing in more modern times, since Eagle is claimed by the Wolf moiety. For other areas I think that the beaded eagle has become popular because of the demand by American people and more recently because of Pan-Indian influences. I would conclude that the tradition of creating beaded eagle images for Yukon Athapaskans started with the Klondike Gold Rush and carried on with the building of the Alaska Highway. The Gold Rush of 1898 saw an influx of Americans, who incidentally thought that Dawson City should be part of the United States. They bought beaded works from local First Nations People. Later on, the construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942 brought a second wave of Americans. As Inland Tlingit, Ingrid Johnson wrote in her *Southern Yukon Beadwork Traditions*:

> Another elder described changes that were brought about by the war and the subsequent building of the Alaska Highway. She and her contemporaries were busy making articles ordered by soldiers and other workers...This woman also recalled her mother's experience in sewing to meet the demands of packers and goldseekers at Dyea [in Alaska, close to Skagway], a departure point for the Chilkoot Pass, during the Dawson Gold Rush. (Johnson 1994: 16, 17)

Johnson goes on to explain more about the changing bead styles:

> Ever-increasing white contact brought with it a shift in economy and commerce. Exchange of commodities gave way to an increased infusion of money as an item of exchange, thereby greatly revaluing the "worth" of hand-made articles and the work that produced them. For example, during the building of the Alaska Highway, women "mass-produced" saleable articles such as fur hats and mitts. (Peters interview, Aug. 18. intricately-designed ceremonial items were then allocated to producing items in demand. Changes in beadwork art over time may profile historical change. (Johnson 1994: 20)

An example of a "demand" item is the pillow cover in Duncan's *Northern Athapaskan Art*. This pillow cover is of Han design and has an American eagle incorporated, obviously ordered by a patriotic American. See figure # 230.

Figure # 230. Han tourist eagle. University of Alaska Museum. UvK drawing.

There are a number of different beaded eagle designs and I am presenting a cross section below. Generally, all the eagles have white heads and darker bodies. While the wings are often spread, this is not a strict rule.

A modern example of a beaded eagle motif was made by Mrs. Albert Isaac (my great grandaunt) from Aishihik in 1966 and is part of the Museum of Civilization's collection. See figure # 231.

Figure # 231, Mrs. Albert Isaac. VI-Q-46, CMC.

The eagle has its identifying white head, the wings are spread straight out and the word Yukon is added in beads below the eagle, indicating to me that this pair of moccasins was made for sale to tourists. For comparison I have included a pair of Inland Tlingit moccasins with an eagle design. See figure # 232. This pair was collected by Clement Lewis in 1912 or earlier from Teslin Lake. Ingrid Johnson identified the eagle design as made by Mrs. Annie Squan (sometimes spelled Sqwam). Annie Squan was one of two wives of Joe Squan, a clan head man of the Crow moiety. There is a photograph of Annie, Joe and Annie's sister, Mary, who is also Joe's wife in the *Handbook of North American Indians*, volume 6, page 474, and in *Their Own Yukon* on page 134. Annie is wearing a shirt with her eagle crest. Joe is wearing a shirt showing his beaver crest and Mary is wearing a button blanket. The dates listed for the photograph is during the summer between 1923 and 1925 for *Handbook of North American Indians* and approximately 1914 for *Their Own Yukon.*

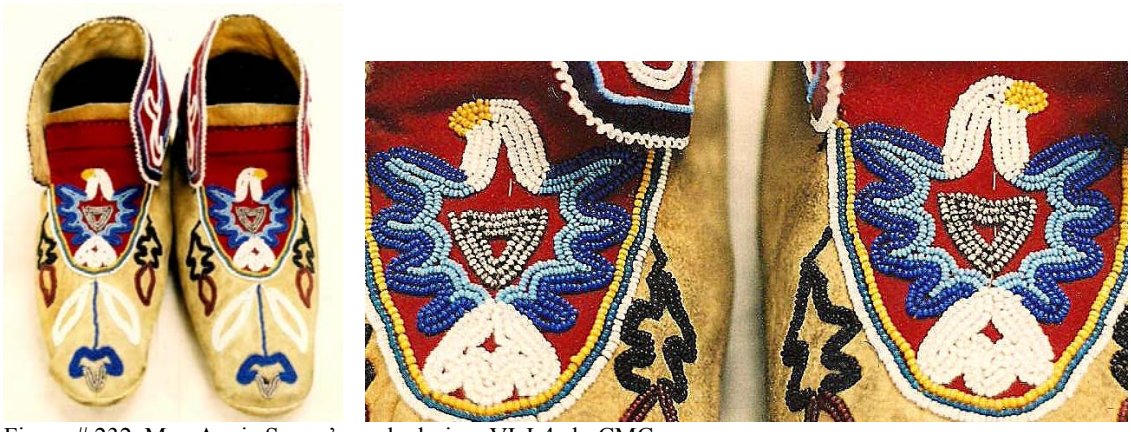


Figure # 232, Mrs. Annie Squan's eagle design. VI-J-4a,b, CMC.

This eagle also had the white head and has its wings spread, but unlike Isaac's, these wings are spread upward. Also, Isaac's wings are green while Squan's wings are blue.
Another common eagle design can be seen in figure # 233. This design is quite common among Athapaskan beaders. The original designer of this pattern is unknown, as is the age of

the design. I obtained it from my mother's pattern collection, herself in turn having collected patterns from other beaders. The head of this eagle is often done in white but the wings are not spread but folded in, in the form of a heart.

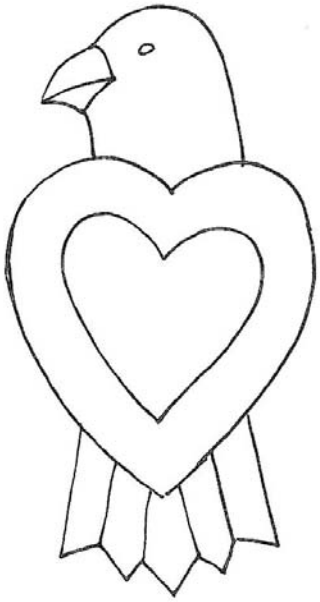


Figure # 233, Yukon Athapaskan eagle bead pattern.

Another Athapaskan eagle can be viewed in figure # 234. This eagle is beaded on a pair of older mitts that I own. The mitts were obtained in Whitehorse and the maker of these mitts is unknown. They are thought to have come from Carmacks which would make them Northern Tutchone. This eagle has a similar layout to the Inland Tlingit eagle styles with its wings spread upward. I have seen this pattern made by both Athapaskan and Inland Tlingits. I estimate that these mitts are about 50 years old.

Figure # 234, eagle mitts. Ukjese van Kampen.

Moose & Caribou

From beaded birds I move on to beaded animals. Below is a series of caribou and moose. The following caribou is on a supposedly Kutchin sled bag. See figure # 235 of the bag that is in the Sheldon Jackson Museum collection and # 236 for a photograph of the caribou. The caribou is placed on top of a large floral design at the center of the bag flap. The initials "JR" as placed to the left of the caribou. This was not an uncommon practice in the Yukon. Just before the beginning of the twentieth century a few Yukon First Nations people learned to read and write. When they returned back to their village the people in the village asked them to write the initials on their possessions. For a period around the turn of the twentieth century it was common to have initials on various items such as drums, knives, bags, etc. You can see other examples of initials on the drum in figure # 5 ("P") on page 30 and the copper knife from Aishihik in figure # 287 ("JRX") on page 283. I wonder if the X in JRX is even part of an initial since I have never heard of anybody in the Yukon with a name starting with "X". Other thoughts about this are that the "X" is the initial of a person who could not read or write and always signed his name with an "X". Another idea is the "X" stands for Christ. If so, then the initials would be "JR" and "X" meaning the person JR with Christ, so JR being a person of the Christian faith. I wonder if there is a relationship between the two "JRs". There was a lot of trade between the Aishihik area people and the Chilkat Tlingits and this bag may have come from Aishihik, which would strengthen the "JR" initials coming from the same person. The caribou is rendered in a simple beaded style, almost in silhouette but outlined. Based on the bead style, the use of stem works and ample background, I would say this bag is done in the Yukon or Tanana River area of which Aishihik is part. I do not think this bag is Kutchin, or correctly, Gwich'in.

Figure # 235 Caribou design on Athapaskan sled bag. SJM, SJ-IV-X-42.

Figure # 236 Caribou design on Athapaskan sled bag. SJM, SJ-IV-X-42.

In the Glenbow Museum is a series of caribou beaded on the front and back of a Tahltan shirt. These caribou are in the same style as the moose in figure # 239, illustrating a similarity in animal beaded styles among Athapaskans. See figure # 237 for the front and back of the shirt and # 238 for a detail photograph of the caribou.


Figure # 237, Tahltan caribou shirt. AC 57, Glenbow Museum.

This shirt was purchased by the Glenbow Museum from Mr. William Halmer in 1965. The front has four beaded caribous and the front panel, coming down from the collar, has a simple stem-leaf silk embroidery design extending the whole length. The middle caribou on the back of the shirt is of different colour and design, having a smaller size and set of antlers.

This may be the female caribou. Also note the typically curving, geometric Tahltan beaded motifs in the center of the back of the shirt.

Figure # 238, Detail of caribou on Tahltan caribou shirt. AC 57, Glenbow Museum.

At the MacBride Museum is a hunting bag with a moose motif beaded on the flap. See figure # 239 for the obscured photograph and figure # 240 for my drawing of the detail. This bag was made by Southern Tutchone Mrs. Kitty Henry from the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation. It appears to be beaded in an X-ray fashion, the lines running up the body being ribs. It could also be the intent of the creator to maintain the stem work within the motif, since the pattern is also in the antlers and there are no separate bones inside antlers.

Figure # 239-photograph, moose bag, MacBride Museum.

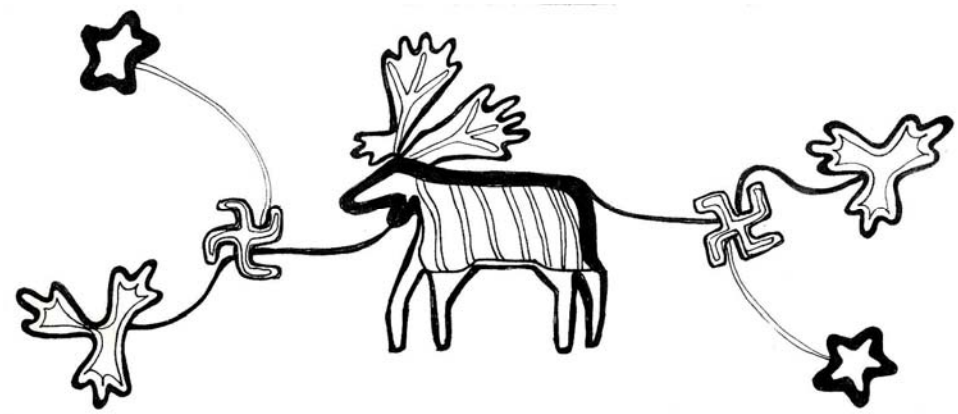


Figure # 240 Kitty Henry bag. MacBride Museum. UvK drawing.

The swastika beaded on the floral design was not that uncommon. There are other examples of swastikas, such as the example in figure # 241. This small pouch was collected by Clement Lewis from Teslin Lake and arrived at the Museum of Man in December 1912.

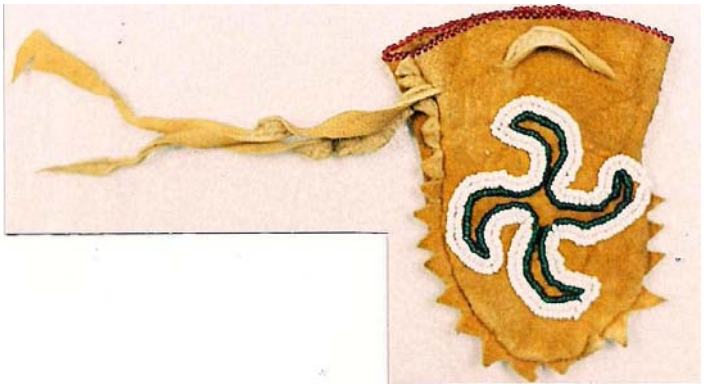


Figure # 241, swastika design. VI-J-14, CMC.

Wolves

From caribou and moose I will move on to their predator, the wolf. The first beaded wolf images I examine in figure # 242 are from the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta. See figure # 243 for the details of the wolves. This jacket was purchased from Mr. William Halmer in 1965. It is listed as Tahltan. The information of this shirt lists the animals as dogs. I do not think that these are dogs since they are often seen as hostile towards humans. In *My Old People Say* McClellan wrote:

> Dogs occupy an anomalous position with respect to both humans and other animals. Certainly the Tagish and Inland Tlingit share the sentiment that dogs are essentially hostile to man and that they are anathema to the spirits of most animals. “Dogs are wicked. They are always out to beat humans!” declared a Teslin informant. This sentiment seems to be felt either explicitly or implicitly throughout the area. (McClellan 2001: 161)

The Athapaskan distrust of dogs is not limited to the Yukon. The following is a quote from *Ways of Knowing: Experience, Knowledge, and Power among the Dene Tha* about the clothing and dogs:

> It is general knowledge that all old clothing, pillows, and blankets, especially those of children and the deceased, should be carefully disposed of, either buried in the bush away from dogs or passed on to close relatives who may use them for their own children. The Chipewyan think of the dog as a "scavenger and consumer of feces," as well "as exemplars of uncontrolled and unregulated sexuality" (Sharp 1995, 70). This belief is held by many other Dene groups. Dogs are clearly a source of worry to the Dene Tha, who says that if a dog happens to urinate on someone's clothes or picks at them, that person becomes ill. (Goulet 1998: 98)

While dogs were sometimes used in hunting, based on the above information I would have to say that the animals on the jacket are wolves. I will extend this observation also to the other images I present. Most Elders felt that they were wolves with one suggesting that they looked like coyotes. Wolves would furthermore fit in the moiety system.

Figure # 242, Tahltan wolf shirt. AC 56, Glenbow Museum.

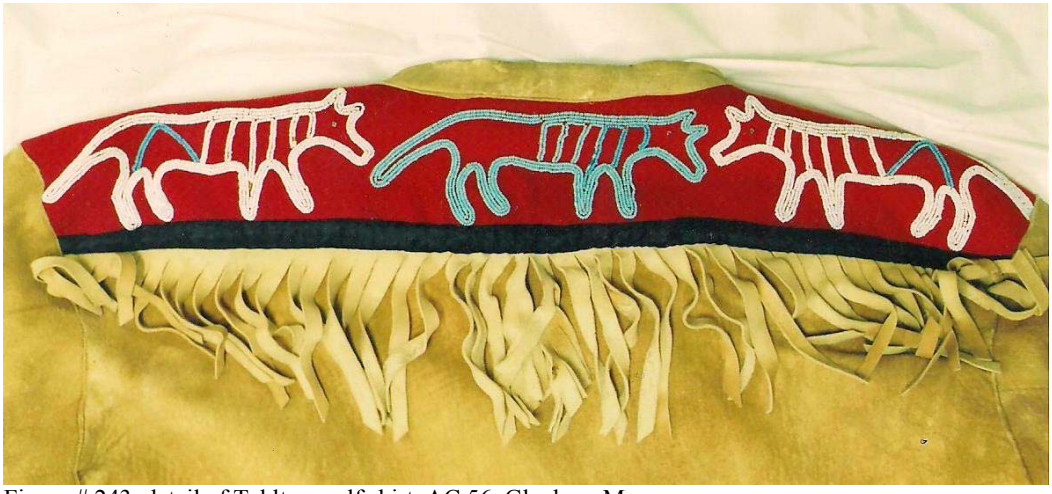


Figure # 243, detail of Tahltan wolf shirt. AC 56, Glenbow Museum.

Figurative art: comparing Athapaskan with Inland Tlingit art

You may notice, especially when reading Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death, that there are more Inland Tlingit than Yukon Athapaskan figurative and human images. Why was this? My thoughts on this subject are quite simple. Athapaskans very well may have made fewer figurative images but there are other issues to consider. The southern Yukon was one of the last areas in North America to be explored. Almost all of the artifacts collected before the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898 from the southern Yukon was obtained by collectors such as George Emmons. George Emmons was not out collecting artifacts from the southern Yukon but from the coastal Tlingits. The Tlingits put high value on good quality clothing and other items that were obtained through trade from the interior. Some of these items were collected by George Emmons and then later ended up in museums in the United States. Compared to the amount of Tlingit artifacts collected the Athapaskan artifacts make up a very small percentage. In addition, these Athapaskan artifacts had for the most part no figurative art on them. A large percentage of those Athapaskan artifacts with figurative art were collected from the Tahltan, very little came from the Yukon itself. After the Klondike Gold Rush, because of their relationship with the Tlingits, the Inland Tlingits' artifacts were sought after by the early collectors. The Museum of Man (now Canadian Museum of Civilization) hired people to collect Inland Tlingit and Tahltan artifacts, but put little effort into collecting other Yukon First Nations artifacts. The result is a larger proportion of Inland Tlingit and Tahltan objects in the present Canadian Museum of Civilization and therefore more Inland Tlingit human and other figurative images compared to Yukon Athapaskan human images. With the combination of possibly producing fewer examples of figurative art, plus the tradition of cremating or burying the deceased personal items, have simply left fewer Athapaskan artifacts to examine today.

Another question is whether Yukon Athapaskans made more elaborate figurative art than the common stylized stick figures and carved images. If answered in the affirmative, we can only assume that they have been lost in time. As we have seen, figurative images were created in all aspects of early Yukon First Nations art: the various stick figures and figure carvings from the Geometric Period and later the beaded figurative images created during the Beaded Period. If there were any more elaborate figurative images from the Geometric Period, they would have been small. This would have made them transportable to allow for the semi-nomadic lifestyle, but also easier to lose. The only non-transportable carvings were the boundary markers shown in figures # 212 & 213 on page 218.

Closing comments

There are various styles of figurative art in the Yukon. First there are simple stick figures, either human or animal. Second we have the outlined figures with use of the 'x-ray' technique showing the inner structure of animals and using the center line with a series of dot and ribs. They are all made using the artist's own preferences. Third are the simple silhouette images and variations thereof.

The meanings behind a lot of the created images have been lost in time. I therefore have to limit my intentions to offering a basic glimpse of the art style that dominated the early Yukon.

Reasons range from showing a food source such as the various hunted animals, illustration of a story, or representation of crest or clan. They may also represent shaman's guides, such as the otter type animals as shamans' helpers. Figurative art was placed on drums, tools, clothing and other objects and was often more than mere decoration. I will return to other examples of figurative art in some of the later chapters.

Chapter Six-Ritual, Shaman Art & Story Related Art

Introduction

In this chapter I will look at art found on artifacts used in rituals such as puberty drinking tubes and smoking pipes. I will also examine items used by shamans, such as drums and dolls. Finally I will show some examples of Yukon First Nations carvings that represent our stories. I like to stress that this chapter is not about the rituals or shamanism themselves, but will mostly focus on the art depicted on the objects. If you would like to learn more about Yukon First Nations rituals and shamanism I would recommend McClellan's *My Old People Say.*

Puberty drinking tubes

Drinking tubes or drinking straws were used as part of the ritual that girls went through when they had their first menstrual cycle. The tube was just one of the ritual items the girls used, along with scratchers, puberty hoods and raven feathers to comb their hair (to keep their hair black all their lives). The tubes are the only items that seem to have been commonly preserved. They were made by the mother from the leg bone of a swan and were decorated with geometric designs. The tube had a rope or band attached to it so the girl could wear it around her neck where it was always ready for use. Sometimes scratchers were attached to the rope or band. When the girl had her first menstruation she was isolated from the main camp as a sign of transition from girl to woman. She went into isolation as a girl and emerged a woman. The isolation may also have been so as not to affect the hunting luck of the camp. The period of isolation depended on the status of the girl and could be as long as two years! During this isolation the girl was ideally, but not always, tended to by the aunts of the opposite moiety. The girl observed certain rituals and was taught to sew very well. During isolation time the girl's sewing ability improved greatly. If she was not sewing she was pulling spruce needles off a branch, one by one, to keep her in continuous training. After the first four fasting days the girl could drink and eat. She also wore the hood that almost totally cut her off from the outside world. This hood hung in front of the face as well as over the shoulders and was effective in reducing the girl's vision as well as hiding her from anybody who may see her. See figure # 244 of a modern day puberty hood.

Figure # 244. Modern day Puberty hood made by Southern Tutchone Elder Ms. Mary Dequerre, 2006. UvK Collection.

Upon completion of the puberty ritual the hoods were given to women of the opposite moiety. The hoods were cut up and made into moccasins. This explains the present lack of puberty hoods. The hood below was made by Ms. Mary Dequerre, a Southern Tutchone Elder from Haines Junction in 2006. Sadly, Ms. Dequerre has passed away in 2008. The hood is made of commercial tanned hide and has floral bead designs on the sides as well as store-bought bone tubes reminiscent of dentalia shells. The puberty ritual declined after World War Two and is generally not practiced today although there are a few families, mine included, that do recognize the importance of the ritual and at least conduct a modified version.

Swan down was also part of the ritual, woven into sinew and wrapped about the hands and arms. Swan down was furthermore used to wipe the face, thought to increase the whiteness for beauty.

These drinking tubes were also sometimes used by men after giving a potlatch, as in the case of the Upper Tanana. In the Yale University publication *The Upper Tanana Indians* by Robert A. McKennan, he states the following:

> For 100 days after the ceremony the potlatch-man can neither sleep, nor have intercourse, with his wife. He eats very sparingly, avoiding the heads of animals and subsisting largely on a soap made from fat of caribou or other fat animals. He must suck his drinking water through a swan-bone tube. He does not cut any meat lest he get blood on his hands. He scratches his face only with a scratching stick. (McKennan 1959: 137)

Note the similarities with the puberty ritual by using drinking tube as well as scratchers. The drinking tubes are all essentially the same except for the differences in engraved geometric designs and the design of the band that is attached to the tube. Below in figure # 245 is two examples of drinking tubes. These tubes have a similar style necklace, which is a single wide beaded strap attached to the bone. The one on the top is from the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin and is listed as Tajunak. This may refer to the Tranjik-Kutchin of the Black River area in Fort Yukon and east up the Black River from the interior of Alaska and into the Yukon Territory or to the former general term for the Gwich'in: Takudh. The drinking tube on the right is in the collection of the Peter the Great Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia which would indicate it may have been collected in the Sitka area. The Peter the Great museum has a large collection of Tanaina artifacts but the tube's neck band is made of beads and the Tanaina were not great users of beads. Therefore it may have come from another area via the Russian trade network.


Figure # 245. Left: Drinking tube. IV A6109. SMB. Right: Drinking Tube, Peter the Great Museum.

The next two drinking tubes are using dentalia shells in the necklace part. The one on the left is also at the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin and is listed as Tajunak. The tube on the right is in the Royal Ontario Museum and is listed as Athapaskan. There is a wide beaded band around the tube and at the end of that band is the necklace made of dentalia shells. Two strands are attached to the tube. Because of the value of dentalia shells one would assume that the wearer came from a well off family. See figure # 246 for the two examples with the dentalia shells.


Figure # 246. Left: Drinking tube. IV A6125. Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin. Right: Drinking Tube, ROM.

The next two drinking tubes in figure # 247 have thinner necklaces. The top tube has a beaded strand and is attached at the sides of the beaded middle covering of the tube. It is in the Alaska State Museum collection in Juneau, Alaska. The tube on the bottom is in the Peabody Museum collection in Boston. It is listed as 'Tinne' (Athapaskan) and was gifted to the museum in 1905. The bottom tube is attached in the middle and the string is wrapped with quills. The tube itself is decorated with the typical Athapaskan geometric designs. All seven drinking tubes shown here have geometric motifs engraved into the tube. The right tube in figure # 245 as well as the top tube in figure # 247 both have a series of lightly engraved geometric motifs, although they are hard to see in the photographs.

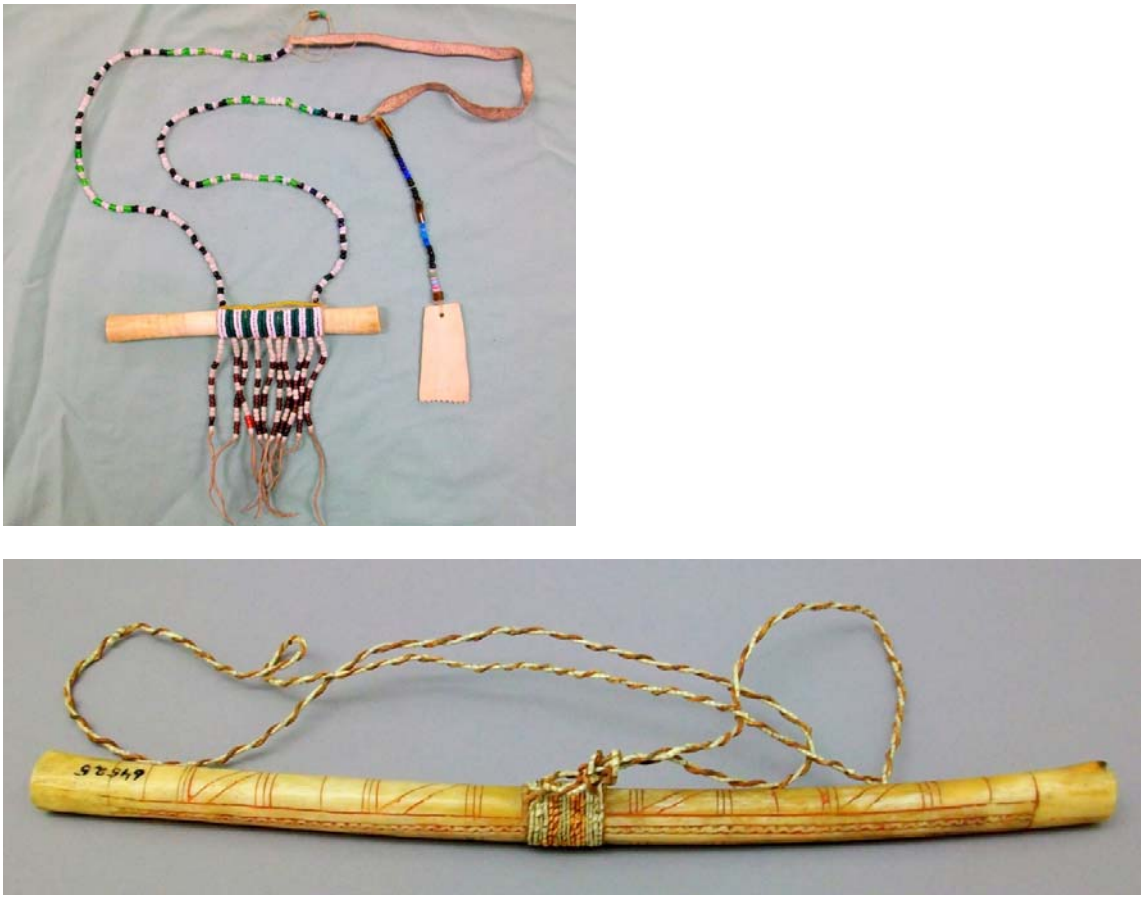


Figure # 247. Top: Drinking tubeII-C-119. ASM. Bottom: drinking tube, 05-7-10/64525. Peabody Museum

In the following figure # 248, is a drinking tube which has the scratchers attached to the string for convenience. This tube is in the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka, Alaska and is listed as Chilkat Tlingit. It has been traded from the interior, most likely from the Tutchone people. On the right is an example of scratchers by themselves. These scratchers are in the Royal Ontario Museum and the notes state that they were collected by the Tlingit Indians from the Hootchi River. This would be the Southern Tutchone village of Hutchi. As you can see, these are close in style to the scratchers on the Sheldon Jackson drinking tube.

Figure # 248. Top: Drinking tube & scratchers. I.A. 231 a-f, SJM. Bottom: scratchers, 939.31.90. ROM.

The drinking tubes were almost always decorated with engraving and hung from a fancy necklace so the tube could be worn at all times. As in most things Athapaskan each one is individual. While some follow the same pattern, the width of the necklace or the use of a beaded band around the tube seemed to be up to the maker. I have not been able to categorize the tubes by group.

Pipes

Before I started my research into early Yukon First Nation's art I had never heard or seen of any early Yukon First Nations pipes. Since then I have come across a number of examples. Smoking pipes was part of the early lifestyle of Yukon First Nations people. The 'tobacco' was obtained from the coastal Tlingits as stated in *My Old People Say.* McClellan writes about the early trade between the coastal and interior people:

> Two other traditional articles brought by the Tlingit in precontact times were eulachon grease and a mixture of crushed clam shells and "tobacco," which Raven taught the

> coastal people how to grow. Presumably it was not true tobacco (Swanton 1909:89, 334; Dixon 1933: 150) (McClellan 2001: 502)

Later reports indicate it was indeed tobacco and was very popular in the Yukon and surrounding regions. It was always part of trade. The Tagish and Inland Tlingit and most likely other groups used to have a 'smoking party' after the death of a member of the community and it was at this party that the practical details of the coming potlatch would be worked out. Smoking was a leisure activity and there were even smoking hats, made to wear when enjoying tobacco. Even today tobacco can be offered as a gift, for example when a person gathers red ochre. An early reference to the manner people smoked comes from Robert Campbell's 1843 journey down the Pelly River. He met some First Nations people who had never seen a white man before. They smoked a pipe of peace:

> Two of their leading Chiefs, father and son, named Thlin-ikik-Thling and Hanan were tall, stalwart, good looking men, clad from head to toe in dressed deerskins, ornamented with beads & porcupine quills of all colours. We smoked a pipe of peace with them & I distributed some tobacco & presents among them. (Wright 1976: 40)

It's not clear who had the pipe, but it is obvious that the First Nations people were practiced in the pipe smoking ritual. Campbell describes the scene as if it was the most normal thing for the First Nations people to smoke the pipe. McKennan states about the Upper Tanana tobacco and pipe use:

> Tobacco was also smoked in pipes made of both wood and horn. No examples of these now exist, nor do they seem to have been used much by the Upper Tanana. According to the Indians, pipes were more common on the Yukon River, where they obtained them.
> After the opening of the Yukon trade, the natives obtained tobacco from the traders, but previous to this it was obtained from the Kluane, who in turn secured it from the Chilkat. The Upper Tanana natives are of the opinion that the latter grew it. (McKennan 1959: 40)

McKennan conducted the research for his publication during fieldwork with the Upper Tanana people in Alaska between 1929 and1930. But even by that time the Upper Tanana, although quite isolated, had already adopted many aspects of modern lifestyle. The result is that even research back then had to deal with gaps in northern Athapaskan culture as noted in the above statement. I could not find out who exactly used pipes. It does appear that young men could smoke and I seem to remember an old photograph of an Elder woman with a pipe in her mouth. I could not find out another function for pipes the use by shamans.

The first pipe I show is from the Alaska State Museum and is made of stone. I have very little information about this pipe but as you can see in figure # 249 it has the common Athapaskan geometric motifs engraved into the body. It is a good example of a geometric designed pipe that most likely found itself on the Alaska coast via the Tlingit trade network with the interior.

Figure # 249, pipe, possibly Tutchone. II-C-45. ASM.

In figure # 250 is a pipe from the Kluane Museum of Natural History in Burwash Landing, Yukon. There is only the bowl part of the pipe. The main body of the bowl is a face, combined with what appears to be a fish carved into it. There are pieces of abalone nailed to the teeth on the pipe but there are many teeth missing the pieces of abalone. The nails would indicate that this pipe was made after the introduction of nails into the area, either from nails that arrived through the Tlingit trade network from the coast or later once trading posts were established in the area. It is not carved in fine detail, like the pipes of coastal Tlingits, but I think it was carved by a person who was influenced by the coastal Tlingits, most likely a Southern Tutchone artist. Burwash Landing is not too far from the Chilkat Tlingits and there was a lot of interaction between them. What exactly the image represents, I do not know. It could have been representative of a person or deity.

Figure # 250, pipe, possibly Southern Tutchone. 995.74, KMNH.

There are a lot of Tahltan pipes in various museum collections. The next pipe has the same general appearance as the pipe in figure # 250. See figure # 251 for a photograph of a Tahltan pipe that is in the National Museum of the American Indian's collection. While not exact, there are the obvious eyes and teeth and use of abalone shells in the decoration of the pipe. This pipe was collected by George Emmons in 1906 when he was collecting Tahltan

artifacts. This pipe had obvious Tlingit influences with the use of the ovoid and "U" shapes. This is not surprising as the Tahltan were influenced in a lot of ways by the Tlingit.

Figure # 251. Tahltan pipe. 009237.000 NMAI.

The following two pipes are some of the finest carved Yukon Athapaskan artifacts I have seen. While Yukon First Nations artists were very capable of carving finely in bone, such as on the bone arrowheads, this intricate work was generally not carried on to other carved objects. The first carved pipe was collected by George Emmons in 1906 and it comes from the headwaters of the Alsek River. The headwaters of the Alsek River are quite close to present day Haines Junction which is Southern Tutchone territory. Unlike the two previous pipes this one has no Tlingit influences. See figure # 252 for photographs of this Southern Tutchone pipe. It has the typical Athapaskan geometric incised motifs including the dot within a circle motif. The National Museum of the American Indian artifact notes state that this is representing a grebe, which is a water diving bird. I would guess that this was told to George Emmons when he collected the pipe. It begs the question, why a pipe carving of a grebe? Was this the artist's yek, his spiritual guide? Was it a tribute to a unique creature that could exist in three worlds: in the air, on the land and in the water? In any case, we are dealing with one of the finest early Yukon carved pipes.

Figure # 252. Southern Tutchone pipe. 009256.00 NMAI.

The next carved object is a pipe at UBC's Museum of Anthropology. See two views of the pipe in figure # 253. This pipe was collected in Fort Selkirk in 1920 and is listed as Athapascan. It was part of the Burnett collection and later became part of the collection at the Museum of Anthropology. The pipe is made out of caribou antler and has a face carved into the bowl part. It appears that a stem is attached onto the back of the pipe. This is an unusual find and I have to admit it looks Inuit. If so, perhaps the pipe arrived in the Fort Selkirk area through trade from the north, but lacking any other evidence, this pipe should be accepted as

Northern Tutchone. The few pipes I have seen often have faces or other animals carved into them. One can only guess at the reason, but since smoke and spirits were thought of as being one and the same, maybe the faces represent the spirit of the smoke.



Figure # 253, caribou antler pipe from Fort Selkirk. A2.229. MOA.

With the strong tobacco use pre-contact, it would stand to reason that there was a pipe tradition in the Yukon before the availability of pipes in stores. As you can see there is a wide range of pipe styles ranging from the geometric stone pipe to very finely carved faces. There were a large number of Tahltan pipes collected and even though they came from one group of people there is a wide range of styles.

Shaman's items

I will examine some of the items that were used by shamans in their practice. This includes arm bands, pendants, drums, masks and dolls. McKennan gives only a partial list the items used by Upper Tanana shamans in their medicine box in *The Upper Tanana Indians* on page 153:

> A drinking tube made of a swan's wing bone
> A packing rope of braided moosehide.
> An awl made from the fibula of a moose. (He replaced this annually)
> The neckskin of a swan.
> A small strip of skin from a piebald moose. (This is strong moose medicine.)
> A nugget of native copper, weight about eight pounds.
> A pouch of powered red ocher.
> Bullets of all calibers, which he had dug out from slaughtered game.
> The horn of a caribou, still in velvet.

McKennan also described the following shaman items:

> Besides this collection of esoteric objects an Upper Tanana medicine man usually possesses a ceremonial rod. These vary considerably among individuals both as to shape and use. John's consisted of a stave about six feet long, to the end of which a bull-roarer was attached; on one side of the latter was painted a swastika and on the other side was a crude sketch of a moose, his medicine animal. The rod from Scottie Creek Titus was about the size and shape of a skinny stick and from its curved end hung a few eagle feathers. Follett Isaac possessed a slender wand about a yard in

> length. It was decorated with ribbons and one end was a leather disc with tufted rays; this device represented the sun which constituted Follett's spirit-helper. Also attached to the rod was a small leather cap and ball, a trident of beads, a beaded cross representing a star, and three buttons suspended on a piece of reddened mooseskin. (McKennan 1959: 152.)

While shamans used more objects in their art than the list I just gave, I am only commenting on those artifacts that had an obvious shaman connection. One could consider the role of shamans as covering the highest of three levels of traditional Yukon First Nations health care. The first level of health care was what everybody had knowledge of and could do themselves or for others. That health related skills included for instance the making of balsam tea to take care of stomach problems or low bush cranberries for treating a sore throat. A second level required more knowledge and this was handled by those people in each band who had more skill in treating cuts, assisting in child birth, etc. If the condition however was more serious, the third level of health care fell upon the shamans. The shamans were located outside the community and often beyond the general rules of everyday living. Clan restrictions often did not apply to shamans. The skilled shaman was able to see the big picture (including other-worldly) of a situation and thus knew how to deal with it. For example, if a person had a serious sickness, the shaman could see beyond that person's illness and the outside force that had caused it. The shaman would deal with that outside force to cure the person. The shaman had about eight spirit guides to give a vision beyond the normal. Besides health care, shamans assisted in hunting, war and other important matters.

Shaman items: bone/antler arm bands

Bone arm bands were not only used by shamans but also by other people for various ritualistic reasons. Since these bands were used by shamans as well as for ritual and other purposes I will present a cross section of arm bands that had various uses. Bone, horn and possibly antler arm bands were often traded from the interior to the coast and this is where many of the arm bands that I examined were collected from. These bands had a number of different purposes assigned to them. If the collectors obtained them from the Tlingits and at the time of trade recorded their purposes, they may not always have been correct. I will explain this later. They were all decorated very nicely and remind me of the small-animal skinning knives made from bone that I examined in Chapter Two-Geometric & Decorative Arts. The bone arm bands are like the round versions of the bone skinning knives. In figures # 254 and # 255 are arm bands from the Peabody Museum in Boston, Massachusetts. In figure # 250 are two bands that were collected by Capt. Edward Fast while he was stationed in Sitka, Alaska in 1867 and 1868. The bands are listed by the museum as: "Athapaskan?; Tinne?; Yupik?" and the museum notes state: " Worn on arm. The long cord with mitten at each end passes across the neck and through these rings and supports the mitten when not on hand (Gordon)./ Made by Athapascans and often traded to the Tlingits, Emmons." The left band in # 255 has a common pattern that can be seen in the breastband design in the tunic in figure # 67B on page 98 as well as in the bone gopher skinning knife in figure # 42, top image on page 70. The band on the right has a different design. While this band also has a geometric pattern that is found on tunics, I wonder if these two bands or two mismatched arm bands. Both are missing the hide rope that can be seen on many other bands. The practice of holding the mitt strings in place by the armband seems quite unpractical as the mitt's string would have to be passed through the arm band. I am assuming that the bands were worn high on the arm and slipping the bands on and off may not have been convenient. Perhaps using

the armbands without the hide throngs to tie and close the opening when wearing the thick winter tunics worked fine.

Figure # 254. Bone arm bands. Left: 69-30-10/2033. Right: 69-30-10/2034. Peabody Museum.

In figure # 251 is the other set of the Peabody Museum arm bands. They have a very nice meander pattern and these same patterns can be found on other items, such as the breastband in figure # 65C and in Inland and coastal Tlingit spruce root baskets. These bands came to the Peabody Museum via the father of Frederic Curtiss.

Figure # 255, Athapaskan armbands, 31-63-10/K96, Peabody Museum.

They are listed as Athapaskan from Alaska or British Columbia, which may mean that they could also come from the area between, the Yukon. The artifact is also listed as Tinne which is the early term used to describe the Dené or Athapaskan people. This would include the Athapaskans of northern British Columbia and Alberta, the western part of the Northwest Territories, most of the Yukon and the interior of Alaska. This same arm band is in Judy Thompson's *No Little Variety of Ornament* and she states:

> The decoration of ritual equipment with incised motifs strongly suggests that at least some of this ornament was more than merely decorative. Some Kutchin groups wore "special carved wood arm bands...in connection with death rites." Koyukon mourners wore "hoops of birch wood around the neck and wrists, with various patterns and figures cut on them. (Glenbow 1987: 142)

The next arm band was used in a death ritual. It is in the National Museum of Natural History Smithsonian in Washington, DC. It is listed as "Tinne, Chilkat R. Alaska" which makes this a Southern Tutchone artifact. The museum notes identify the purpose as "Bone mourning Armlets". As you can see in figure # 256 it is decorated in the typical Athapaskan geometric style and has the hide thongs at the ends. This style of zigzag pattern is also common on other objects, for example on the shaman's pendants in figure # 261.

Figure # 256, Tinne death mourning armlets, 16307, NMNH.

The next arm band is said to be a shaman's bracelet. It is in the Field Museum in Chicago which have a number of these arm bands and all are listed as Chilkat Tlingit. It is most likely that they were all traded to the Chilkats from the Tutchone in the Yukon. This arm band, as many of the others, came to the Field Museum in 1902. I suspect they were collected by George Emmons. See figure # 257 for a shaman's arm band.

Figure # 257, Shaman's armband, 1902.807.78040, Field Museum.

This arm band does not appear to be made from bone but horn. It is also unique in that it has a series of holes drilled around the whole band. The other objects that sometimes have holes drilled into them are ganhooks, the ceremonial dancing paddles.

The Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka, Alaska notes for the next arm band yet another purpose. See figure # 258. The museum lists the band as Tlingit and also states:

> "Collected by: Not recorded; came to museum in 1892; probably Sheldon Jackson." And written inside the band is: "Chilkat Bracelet Used in shooting with bow and arrow 1892". Also in the notes under Materials and construction: "Bone (moose?) has been steamed and bent; fastened with thong through a pair plus one at the ends of the circlet." Under the notes Use: "to protect the upper arm when shooting with bow and arrows."

Figure # 258, Chilkat armband, I.A. 106, SJM.

While this last reason may be possible it seems to be the least valid, as I do not understand how the bands would protect the upper arms. To summarize, the speculation on the use of the bands ranges from the practical to the ritual:

To hold the mitt strings in place,
To protect the arms while shooting,
Used during a death ritual,
Part of a shaman's regalia, and
As decoration.

The bands were very finely engraved which illustrates that the Yukon First Nations mastered this art well. The workmanship of these bands, as well as the power they possessed, made them a valued trade item for the coastal Tlingits. As you may have noticed, none of the examples I have shown were in fact collected from the interior with the exception of one armband I will discuss later in this section. The south-central Yukon First Nations had no direct trade with the non-Native trading companies on the coast. That is with the exception of the brief Hudson Bay Company's Fort Selkirk trading post that started in 1848 and was pillaged by the Chilkat Tlingits in 1852. As with many other south-central Yukon First Nations artifacts, by the time the south-central Yukon First Nations people had steady contact with the trading companies beyond the coastal Tlingits, they had already adopted western clothing and tools and the items that they had previously traded were no longer made.

There is a child's copper arm band that is in the Cleveland Museum of Natural History collection. There is little information about the arm band but the artifact notes state: "Child's copper bracelet. Cold hammered from native copper. Made by father, taken from her wrist and given to miner." The remaining notes state that this is a subarctic artifact that was collected in Alaska/Yukon. Its accession number is a 1988 number indicating that it arrived at the museum in 1988. The arm band has a zigzag pattern all the way around it and this pattern is a typical Athapaskan geometric motif. Because of the geometric designs I suspect that it was made well before World War Two. I have seen no geometric designs on any artifacts in my research that were made after World War Two. This might indicate that at least some early arm bands were made of copper. The armband was collected in the Alaska/Yukon

border area and may have been in an area where there was a source of copper. These areas would be the Copper River in Alaska and the White River in the Yukon. Because of the mountain ranges I suspect there was a lot more movement across the border in the White River area than the Copper River area, so I think that this bracelet comes from the former. This would make it a Northern Tutchone or Upper Tanana arm band. See figure # 259 for my drawing of the arm band.

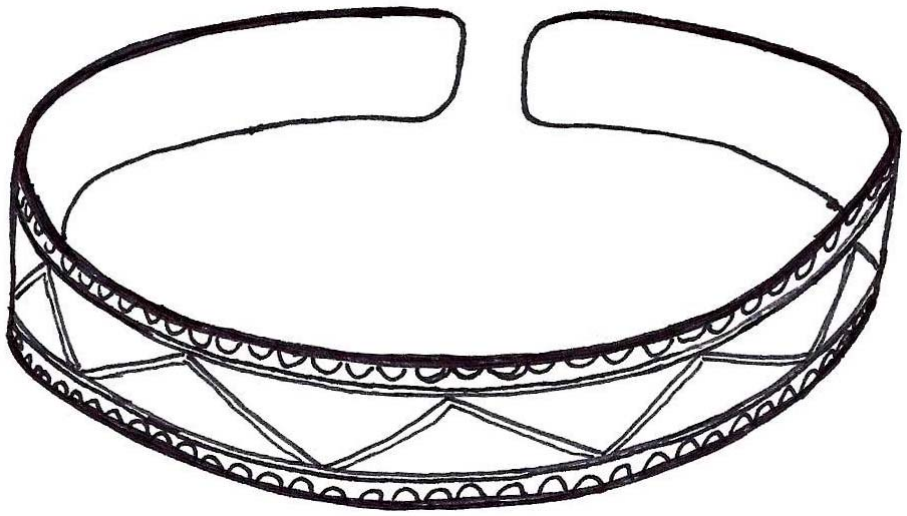


Figure # 259, Athapaskan copper armband. 1988-79; 12979. The Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

Wrist bands were made of metal as well. In the following photograph in figure # 260 is a series of brass Tahltan wrist bands. They were collected by George Emmons in 1906 and are in the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC. Note that they also have geometric designs but are thinner than the above copper arm band.

Figure # 260, Tahltan brass wrist bands. 010971.001 NMAI.

I do not know if there was any special function of the wrist bands and wonder if they were simply used as jewellery. This also begs the question: do the metal bands have the same status as the bone arm bands? The copper band that was worn by the girl in figure # 259 was quickly given away. This suggests a lower status of that copper arm band unless perhaps the father was wishing to impress the miner by his generosity.

Shaman items: pendants

As with the arm bands many of the pendants in museum collections were traded from the interior of the Yukon to the Tlingits and then traded on to collectors, finally ending up in various museums. The exception are those pendants that were obtained though archeological

digs. The following pendants in the Canadian Museum of Civilization were obtained by Richard Morlan near the trading post of Dalton Post in 1977 which is in Southern Tutchone territory. See figure # 261 for a group of pendants that Morlan collected.

Figure # 261. Pendants from JaVg-2 series; CMC.

The museum notes state that these were probably part of a shaman's neck ring. The notes also state: "Restriction: Potential or confirmed grave good or associated burial area artifact." It may be that these pendants were buried with the shaman after his death and later excavated by Morlan.

Because the pendants were intended to be used by shamans, it would be expected that the designs have meaning. In Thompson's *No Little Variety of Ornament* she writes of the Tutchone pendants:

> Perhaps the clearest indication of a spiritual symbolism inherent in some forms of incised decoration is its presence on shamans' necklace pendants from the northern interior British Columbia. On the northern Northwest Coast, elaborate and complex pendants in various animal forms embodied "the spirit power of the shaman's zoomorphic assistants." Presumably, neighboring Athapaskan examples served a similar function. The Athapaskan pendants, while relativity simple in both form and decoration, show considerable diversity in shape and incised motif. The most common shape is lanceolate, although other forms occur, including stylized human figures. (Thompson, 1987: 142)

Note that the Southern Tutchone territory includes the western part of the southern Yukon, parts of northern British Columbia and bits of Alaska. It seems there was quite a trade in pendants and scratchers. Emmons in *The Tlingit Indians* states:

> Flat pieces of caribou horn, incised with geometric figures and lines, were worn only by the shaman. These, I believe, were procured in trade from the interior people. The geometric character of ornamentation is Athapaskan in every line. (Emmons 1991: 248)

At first glance these pendants look only decorative but some may also be representative of humans or spirits. Thompson noted that these may be "shaman's

zoomorphic assistants", but instead of animal representation I find that some look human. I commented on these in Chapter Five: Figurative Art.

In the next figures, # 262 and # 263 are more examples of shaman's pendants. These are from the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Boston. They illustrate the wide range of pendant designs and the high level of artistic individuality that Athapaskan artists exercised.

Figure # 262. Yukon Athapaskan Shaman's pendants. Left to right: 69-30-10/2018, 69-30-10/2011, 69-30-10/2012. Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.

These were once all part of a shaman's neck ring. All the pendants in figures # 262 and 263 were collected by Capt. Edward Gustavus Fast between 1867 and 1868. They were all sold to the Peabody Museum in 1896. The museum notes make several cultural identifications; Subarctic, Nahani, Eskimo, Athapaskan, Tlingit and are listed as coming from: United States, Canada? Northwestern (?) The two on the right of figure # 262 are listed as coming from the Yukon Valley United States. Considering the Tutchone-Tlingit trade routes I would say that these pendants were made in the Yukon River valley by the Tutchone and traded to the Sitka Tlingits via the middlemen Chilkat Tlingits. The two figures on the right in figure # 262 look very much like they are based on the human form. Is the "V" motif on 69-30-10/2011 representing the deep "V" pattern of the breastband of the hide tunics of the time? If so, this may be a person. The last figure on the right also looks like a head and the shoulders of a person. While these two seem to be stylized human figures the rest do not look human at all. See figure # 263 below.

Figure # 263. Yukon Athapaskan Shaman's pendants. 69-30-10/2017, 69-30-10/2016, 69-30-10/2021, 69-30-10/2022, 69-30-10/2019. Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.

Again, many shaman pendants were traded to the coastal Tlingits from the interior. I do not think the coastal Tlingit shamans would import items that did not have a deep spiritual meaning. Since these pendants were intended for the Tlingit shamans I wonder if they were created by Athapaskan shamans. Because of the importance of the class system the pendants would have been created by a person of the same status. They could also have been made by a crafts person of high status. There is a wide range of these designs and I wonder if there was a secret pendant language incorporated for shaman use. Were these pendants ordered? Did the maker of the pendants explain what they meant to the Tlingit traders and shamans? When I questioned Alaskan Tlingits about their past practice of importing shaman's pendants they explained the situation to me in the following manner: The pendant is simply a transceiver between the shaman and the spirit world. An Athapaskan makes the pendant and trades it to a Tlingit Shaman who is able through the pendant to have a relationship with the spirit world. This works very much the same way as buying a radio that was made in China. When you turn it on you are listening to the local radio station and not a Chinese radio station. Nevertheless there is a great deal of information that is not known and a detailed look into the trade practices of Yukon and Tlingit shamans may answer some of these questions.
Some pendants may have been for people other than shamans. For example, pendants could have been imported for hunters. In this case they would be, as Judy Thompson describes, zoomorphic assistants.

Shaman items: drums

Throughout this thesis you will see many drums, but the next drum in figure # 264 is the only one that has been identified with some certainty as belonging to a shaman and based on what is written by E.J. Glave. It may have held a lot of power. The drum in the Manitoba Museum in figure # 178 on page 194 is listed as used for dances and medicine making and therefore was not solely used for shaman rituals. This makes me wonder whether some drums were used only by shamans, such as the one in figure # 264, and others for various functions by different people, including shamans, such as the Manitoba Museum drum. The practice required that the shaman was buried with all his/her shamanist tools which would include drums. Therefore, the Manitoba Museum drum may not have been owned by a shaman, as it

was collected by the Stringers. I have not heard of them collecting from graves. The Manitoba drum is most likely a combination drum, such as described by McKennan, where he reports that the Upper Tanana shamans did not all use special drums:

> I did not see a drum used in connection with shamanism, although after the séance one was brought out to provide music for the dance; but I was told that Follett Isaac used a drum in connection to his healings. (McKennan 1959: 152)

The image on the drum below is identified as a frog but it is not easily recognizable as such. See figure # 264 for the original drawing and also for my own drawing of the drum. While the image has a face that may look like a frog it seems to have a tail as well as teeth. Most of the time when frogs are depicted they do not have teeth. See figure # 222 on page 224 of the Tahltan cartridge belt with the frog showing teeth. The description of a drum with a painted design is found in E.J. Glave's story: "Our Alaskan Expedition: Exploration of the 1891-05 unknown Alsek River Region" for Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper. The description reads:

> The drum of the village medicine-man was hanging in his hut, being a wooden frame two feet in diameter, and covered with shaved bearskin, which was covered with grotesque designs. The owner of this instrument was away, and perhaps had left it as his representative in order to keep the little settlement free from evil spirits, a power which is always credited to those worthies.

The image on the drum may also represent another spiritual helper of the shaman. The Elders I spoke to were unsure if the frog-like animal was indeed a frog. Some thought it could be another animal but did not know what type. I suspect that the frog is a spiritual helper rather than a clan crest. The Southern Tutchone "overlaid" the Wolf and Crow clan system over the Tlingit crest system and the Tlingit Frog clan is thought of as part of the Southern Tutchone Crow moiety. This design is not in the style of the Chilkat Tlingit clan crest frogs from Klukwan, which is close to the area where the drum was recorded. See the Chilkat Tlingit frogs in figure # 265. There is a more complex frog design on a dance bib that may be Inland Tlingit or Tagish, again a clan crest. See figure # 266. While the Inland Tlingit/Tagish frog is one of the more complex I have seen, it still is easily identifiable as a frog. If the image is a frog, then it must be rendered in the highly individual Southern Tutchone art style. Also, in all four legs are faces. There is a pair of almost leaf like parts coming off the tail. These 'leaves' are in a similar style as the design in figure # 226 on page 226. There are also three lines coming off the edges of the drum toward the front legs. Are these claws? Or are they representing the wave of water? I cannot help but notice that this frog has a lot of the same traits as the earlier lizard type animals I examined in the previous chapter, in figures # 197 on page 207 and # 198 on page 208.

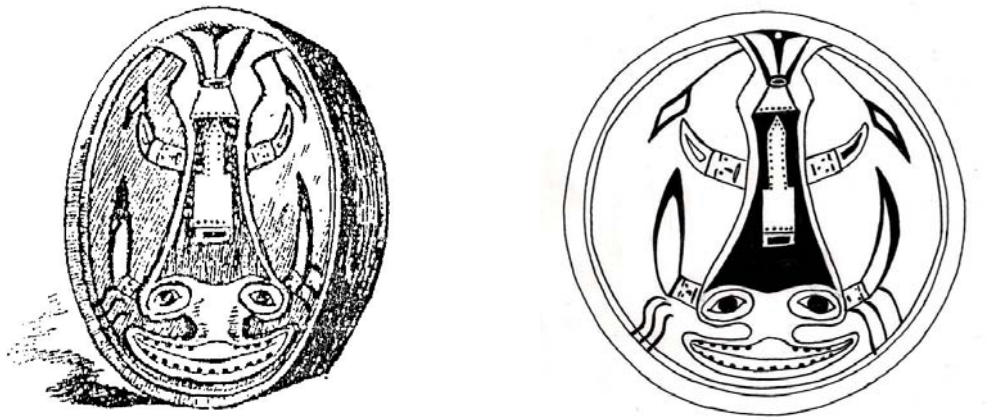


Figure # 264, shaman's Frog drum. Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.

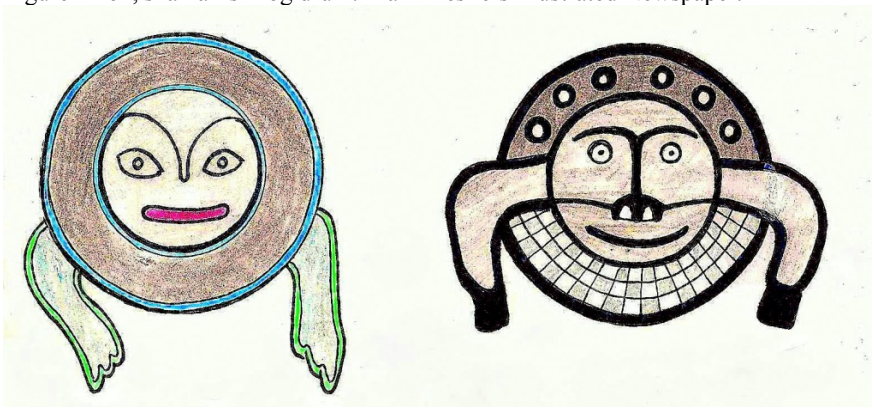


Figure # 265 Chilkat Tlingit frogs. UvK drawings.

Figure # 266, Inland Tlingit/Tagish frog image. VI-J-99 CMC. UvK drawing.

In figure # 267 is another image on a drum, a moon-like motif painted in red. This drum is on display in the MacBride Museum. This drum is made of beaver hide. The design is simple and yet strong. Because the image looks like a moon, I think it may have been a shaman's drum. I am basing this on what Honigmann writes in *The Kaska Indians*:

> *Dease River Kaska.* Averaging about 15 to 16 inches in diameter, the tambourine drum of semi-tanned moose hide furnished the chief musical instrument of the

> Kistagotena. Only shamans decorated these objects with symbols representing the sky, moon, and stars. (Honigmann 1964: 73)

Also what McKennan writes in *The Upper Tanana Indians*:

> The neophyte secures his *diz'yin* in a dream. Although this may be represented by some natural phenomenon such as the sun or the moon, it is usually associated with an animal. (McKennan 1959: 150)

McKennan has the foot note stating:

> Compared with the Han: "Some medicine men employ the sun, moon, or stars in their songs instead of an animal, while others call upon the trees, brush, or any convenient object" (Schmitter, 1910: 18) (McKennan 1959: 150)

The neophyte or shaman apprentice is securing his diz'yin which is equivalent to the southern Yukon's yek. Since the drum appears to have a moon design painted on it and based on the above foot note by McKennan, it can be argued that this is a shaman's drum. The drum is listed as Kutchin (Gwich'in) in origin and was donated by Frank Sidney. There is a man named Frank Sidney who is from Teslin, which makes me doubt that this is a Gwich'in drum, but rather Inland Tlingit.

Figure # 267, "Moon" drum, MacBride Museum.

Shaman items: dolls

Many people may not think of dolls as shamans' tools or even art, but some of the dolls made in the early Yukon and surrounding regions have been more than just children's toys. While there has been little research into early First Nations dolls in Canada, there has been a lot of interest in Alaska. In the book *Not Just a Pretty Face: Dolls and Human Figurines in Alaska Native Cultures,* which was published by the University of Alaska Press in Fairbanks, an overview is given of doll use in Alaska. Most of the descriptions in the book do not involve the Yukon Athapaskans and Inland Tlingit, but there is much information on Alaskan Athapaskans and the coastal Tlingit.

In *Not Just a Pretty Face: Dolls and Human Figurines in Alaska Native Cultures* human figurines and dolls are divided into three categories. On page 8 Angela J. Linn and Molly C. Lee suggest the following:

> ...Alaska Native groups used human figurines in three general ways: (1) miniatures were attached to the body or clothing of children and adults as charms or amulets, (2) larger figurines were made either for use in more formalized ritual and ceremony, or (3) children's playthings. (Lee 2006: 8)

Due to similar lifestyles, Yukon First Nations would have had a similar approach to doll beliefs and use. I have already discussed amulets or charms in the previous chapter (see figure # 196 on page 207) which would fall into the first section of Lee's categories. In a step beyond the amulets, in terms of human figures, are the shaman dolls. An example of what may have been a shaman's doll is in the University of Alaska Museum North on Fairbanks, Alaska. See figure # 268.

Figure # 268. Gwich'in shaman's doll. UA 78-15-1A, UAF Museum of the North.

The museum staff noted that this doll came from Canada and was made in the late 19th century. The doll has a late 19th century Canadian coin as part of its accessories. As you can see in the photograph there are clock parts, including springs and flywheels, and a little doll for the doll itself. We believed there was a 'force' in everything, so having something that had extra power, such as the parts of a tool that could indicate the minutes and hour of a day, may have been desirable for a shaman. Those parts then became a 'transceiver' for the shaman. Another example of the use of watch or clock parts can be seen in Julie Cruikshank's *Reading Voices* on page 100. The photograph shows a neck ring with various attached objects including buttons and clock springs. The curator of University of Alaska Museum of the North told me that when Elders saw the doll it gave them an uneasy feeling. The Elders felt that this was a shaman's doll. Going along with the idea that this is a

shaman's doll and that dolls may be more than toys, read the following statement in *Not Just a Pretty Face: Dolls and Human Figurines in Alaska Native Cultures*:

> In addition to the Deg Hit'an, several other Athabascan groups also used human figurines in their rituals. Among the Tanaina Athabascans, for instance, the so-called "devil doll" was employed as a means of removing the evil spirit from an afflicted person. Devil dolls were carved by shamans and were sometimes clothed in complete suits of caribou skin. (Lee 2006: 18)

In the photograph accompanying the text is a Tanaina doll that is suggested to be a devil doll. The doll is in the Peter the Great Museum in St. Petersburg in Russia. That doll looks close to the following dolls that I will be presenting in this section. While I don't claim that we are here dealing with devil dolls, there may have been some dolls made in the Yukon that were used for rituals. To illustrate the importance that dolls held for Yukon First Nations people, the next photograph is of Chief Isaac of Moosehide taken in Dawson City. This photograph is shown in figure # 92 on page 120 and here again in figure # 269 below. The doll appears to have the traditional First Nations hide trouser-boot combination pants but is also wearing a western style jacket. It is obvious to me that the doll held some degree of importance.

Figure # 269. Chief Isaac with doll. 984.32.1.16 DCM&HS.

Many dolls were of course made for children and some were made to sell to tourists. This last category was a natural follow through from the trade practices with the coastal

Tlingits, as early dolls were traded from the Athapaskan to the coastal Tlingits. In *Not Just a Pretty Face* it states:

> Among the northern Tlingit of Dry Bay and Yakutat, mothers made play dolls for their daughters, or obtained them already made from the interior. The dolls had round stone heads, made either of beach stone (de Laguna 1960:107) or from a powdery white marble obtained from the Interior, purportedly from a mountain near the headwaters of the Alsek River in Canada. (Lee 2006: 12-13)

Dolls are no longer made to be traded with the Tlingits but sold to tourists. See two modern examples in figure # 272.

The following dolls are in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection. No collection date is listed. They were collected by Clement Lewis which would suggest around 1912. The place was likely Teslin where he was collecting the other Inland Tlingit artifacts. In figure # 270 is two examples of Inland Tlingit dolls. The style of VI-J-38 suggests a reflection of the early style dress worn by the Teslin people, as well as all early Yukon First Nations people, with the "V" cut breastband and bottom of the coat. The decoration on the jacket is in the embroidery method, in the same manner that clothing was decorated before the use of trade beads. Note that this doll is missing its headdress and bow & arrow. These items were lost from an exhibition in 1988. Even though these two dolls were collected at the same time, the beadwork and coat style on VI-J-39 shows an evolution in styles. The decoration on the coat is now beaded and the breastband and bottom are square cut, something that became common after trading posts were established in the Yukon. The hide in VI-J-39 appears to look newer and less worn than in VI-J-38, maybe indicating that the creation dates of the two dolls are different. On the Canadian Museum of Civilization information card of VI-J-39, it was originally listed as "Pelly Indian Doll". This may be so, but being collected from Teslin and with an Inland Tlingit bead style, I doubt it is from Pelly, which is presently Kaska territory and in the past was also Northern Tutchone territory. It is however possible that an Inland Tlingit spent time in the Pelly area and created these dolls there.

Figure # 270 Inland Tlingit Doll. VI-J-38, CMC. Inland Tlingit Doll. VI-J-39, CMC

In figure # 271 is shown more examples of early Yukon First Nation dolls. The doll on the left is from the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka, Alaska. The doll on the right is from the Glenbow Museum. The doll from the Sheldon Jackson Museum is generally the same in design but appears older than the Inland Tlingit doll in figure # 270, VI-J-38. The museum notes state that this doll is Athapaskan but there is no record of when the doll was made, who obtained it and from where. The doll has the same style older tunic common in the interior, but unlike the doll above, has also the older type trousers that had the moccasins attached and the geometric designs coming down the front of the trouser. This is obviously a doll that has been traded from the interior to the coastal Tlingits sometime in the past. The other doll in figure # 271 on the right is more recent as it was collected in 1966. It was obtained by the museum in 1992. While there is little information on this doll I decided to include it as it is made from gopher (ground squirrel) skins. Gopher skins were often used in the past and after World War Two their use quickly reduced. The museum notes state that the doll was collected from Pelly Crossing, which would make this most likely a Northern Tutchone doll, although some Mountain Dene families live there. This doll was collected at the same time as another doll, but the notes do not state who made them.

Figure # 271. Early Athapaskan dolls; Left: Athapaskan doll from collection of Sheldon Jackson Museum IV.X.25ab. SJM. Right: Tutchone doll from Pelly Crossing, Yukon. AC 549, Glenbow Museum.

More recent dolls can be seen in figure # 272. These dolls were made in 2006 by Southern Tutchone Elder Annie Smith from Whitehorse. Mrs. Annie Smith was making dolls and selling them to tourists in Carcross in 1939 at the age of 14. The dolls shown here are in the same style as she made them almost 70 years ago. These dolls have the same appearance as the earlier made dolls that are in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection in figure # 270. There are however detail differences. Mrs. Annie Smith uses a more Tutchone style beading to decorate the dolls and also uses slightly different cuts for the breastbands and bottom of the coat. There are many dolls in museum collections which indicate that they were quite common. It suggests their importance in early Yukon First Nations culture.

Figure # 272. Southern Tutchone dolls made by Annie Smith. Ukjese van Kampen collection.

Shaman items: magic war stones

These magic war stones are in the collection of the National Museum of Natural History Smithsonian in Washington DC. I have only seen one example of a set of stones like this with holes and hide bindings attached to them. The other magic stones were loose without any form of attachment. I would suspect that they were carried in a small hide bag. This set is attached to each other by porcupine wrapped hide. There was no description other than that the stones came from around Eagle, Alaska on the Yukon River. This would make them Han. See figure # 273.

Figure # 273. Han 'Magic War Stones'. 255333, NMNH.

These stone were part of the shaman's tool kit and used during times of war.

Shaman items: masks

There are limited written sources about mask use by Yukon shamans. I am asking the reader to keep this in mind. When I asked carvers and Elders about shaman mask use, I was mostly told that they didn't know. As mentioned earlier, it is a First Nations trait to withhold information when this knowledge has not been gained first hand. Furthermore, it is safe to say that shaman knowledge was for the bigger part secretive and not to be shared with the "common" members of the group. I also have no masks to show you in this section. In all my research trips to over 40 museums in North America and Europe I have not seen a single Yukon First Nations mask that was carved before 1986. Despite the lack of evidence I decided to add this section because, as I will try to explain later, we know that shamans did use masks. This is in fact a good thing as the items used by shamans were all buried with the person and this custom does not seem to have been tinkered with. Although I do believe that some Yukon First Nations masks and other objects have ended up in private collections in the United States and elsewhere. This is because of the high rate of grave robbing that occurred with the building of the Alaska Highway and afterward.

In Yukon First Nations spirituality, animals occupy an animal spirit world while people occupy this human world. Animals and people, mostly with or because of the animals, can transform to each other's spiritual world. There are many stories of animals becoming human and taking spouses, or of animals taking humans to their world and the human changing into an animal. With the help of a shaman or a 'doctor', the transformed human could be returned to human form. Many of the people who got transformed were in the wrong place at the wrong time. It was then the shaman's job to make a direct connection to the animal spirit world. In the myth time the mixing of these two worlds was even more pronounced. This is what Catherine McClellan writes about the two worlds in *My Old People Say*:

> What is really important is that myth time was of a slightly different order than the human present, for it was a time marked by the fact that all the animals often looked, talked, and behaved as men. In fact, the line between the humans and non-humans of myth time becomes so blurred that it is hard to know how best to conceive of many of the early inhabitants of the world. In the end, however, those beings that are now animals seem to have pulled on their masks or skins permanently to assume the external appearances they have today. (McClellan 2001: 71)

These transformations continued to occur even after the Myth Time that McClellan writes about. Transformations happened after the coming of the white man and I know of stories occurring after the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898. One man, a distant relative of mine took the form of a moose and as a result was shot. In another case a man turned himself into a Raven in order to escape being hanged by the police. This is a well known story among Tutchone Elders. McClellan continues:

> In myth time, people might look either like an animal species we know today or like the humans we know today, depending on whether or not they wore animal clothes and masks. (McClellan 2001: 325)

From this, we can guess that the shaman used masks in order to become the animal he was trying to reach and to call on those animal spirits for help. In my research I have only come across a couple of references to masks and they mainly had shaman connections. A reference to Southern Tutchone masks and shamans is made in *My Old People Say*:

> (...) My Aishihik data suggest that the use of rattles and masks and the cutting of tongues were pretty well restricted to those bands closest to the coastal Tlingit. (McClellan 2001: 530)

McClellan is suggesting that only the most southernmost Southern Tutchone, Tagish and Inland Tlingit shamans used masks. I do not feel this is correct since the Northern Tutchone, Kaska and Han also used masks and therefore there is no reason why shamans from those areas would not have used masks in their practice. You can see examples in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch and Death.

Later in *My Old People Say* McClellan writes:

> Every Yukon shaman also had various animal skins, bones or other body parts, rattles and other objects to symbolize each one of his helping spirits. Present evidence suggests that only a few shamans who had close coastal ties used actual masks to represent their yek. (McClellan 2001: 538)

Yek refers to the animal spiritual guide of the shaman. As we can see, the shaman's use of masks made a direct link to the animal spiritual world. In Emmons' *the Tlingit Indians*, it is written:

> The mask, *klah-kate, klo-ket*, was the most important part of the shaman's outfit. It alone represented the particular spirit in feature, but necessary with in were the skin wrist robe, the bone necklace, the carved neck charm, and the spirit rattle. Numerous other articles of dress as well as implements were used as accessories, but were less important. Every shaman had four masks representing the four spirits he controlled, but the most powerful shamans processed eight [spirits and eight masks]. (Emmons 1991: 377).

While the above description is from the coastal Tlingit there are a lot of similarities to Yukon First Nations. For example, in the shaman's outfits are examples of Yukon bone necklaces and carved neck charms. The rattles however were rare. Also similar is the relationship with the numbers four and eight. There is little to no description of what the masks looked like. Some Kaska masks were made of bark. There is also an Upper Tanana story that involves a man who wears a hide mask. This would indicate that hide masks were used by the Upper Tanana. Since hide masks were used by sub-arctic people outside the Yukon I see no reason why Yukon First Nations did not use hide masks. Large wooden masks like the coastal Tlingit used would be difficult to transport in the Yukon semi-nomadic society. Everything had to be light and transportable. Bark or hide would therefore be the choice of material. Not having wooden masks and the lack of other masks to examine may have led researchers to conclude that other than those closest to the coast, there was no Yukon First Nations mask tradition. Another reason for the lack of Yukon shaman masks was the burial tradition of putting the masks and other shaman items with the body of the shaman. The corpse of the shaman was either put on a platform, under logs, or in a grave house in a prominent location far from camp. Those that were close to the Alaska Highway and other roads were discovered and robbed. Northern Tutchone Elder Gary Sam told me that all the gravehouses that had masks placed in them and that he saw as a youth, later vanished, stolen by tourists. This included the more recent wooden masks made by people with more permanent life styles in settlements.

In summary, Shaman's masks were made of either hide or bark but after people began settling in permanent villages, people began to use wood to make masks. The masks were

used as a shaman's tool to connect with the spirit and animal worlds. All these masks have been lost in time. When the shaman passed away his shamanistic tools were left with the body on grave platforms or later in gravehouses. I have never seen a photograph, drawing or actual Yukon shaman's mask, therefore their existence is inferred from early records and the existence of neighboring shaman masks.

Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch and Death covers masks used in potlatches and you will show photographs and drawings of early Yukon First Nations (non-shaman) masks.

Story related art-Kitty Smith's carvings

The following carvings are not linked to rituals or shamanism use themselves but refer to stories from the time when people and animals had powers, could talk, transform into human or animal form and Crow was still in our world. While many of the art examples throughout this thesis have connections with stories, I decided to include in this section Kitty Smith's work as an example of art that was carved to illustrate Yukon First Nations stories. Kitty Smith was a Tagish storyteller and carver. Her carvings are the most numerous by any Yukon First Nations artist from the period before and around World War Two.

Kitty Smith's carvings are larger than in earlier times would have been done. They are on average about one foot higher. I believe the increase of size reflects the transition from a semi-nomadic to a more settled lifestyle. The carvings are all based on Tagish stories. Kitty's son, Johnny Smith, stated that Kitty carved stories to target the tourism market and as a result allowed her to carve larger works of art. Kitty Smith did a lot of carving in the 1940s and 1950s and we are lucky that Julie Cruikshank worked with her, recording her stories. In *Life Lived Like a Story* Cruikshank records the start of Kitty's carving career:

> One time we're in Wheaton [River]. Ida saw that popular tree. "Look, Mamma!" I think about it all night. Next day, I went to get it. That's the time I carve those things, poplar. My own daddy made silver [jewelry]. Talk about fancy job! That's why I guess I carve me. I did that when we were living at Robinson. (Cruikshank 1990: 248)

That was in the 1930s and 1940s. Kitty was born in the 1890s in a fish camp near the mouth of the Alsek River to a coastal Tlingit father and Tagish mother. Her style is quite recognizable, which helps, because not all her work was credited to her. Her works were originally listed as "Made by Mackenzie Indians" at the MacBride Museum. I discussed Kitty Smith's carvings with well known Yukon artist Jim Robb and he stated that he recognized her carvings and brought her family into the Macbride Museum to confirm that Kitty Smith was indeed the carver. It seems there was the idea that a woman should not have done a carving. I suspect that this idea came from white people as I have never heard of any such restrictions for women in our culture. As a result Kitty Smith did not openly identify herself as the carver of these art works. See figure # 274 for an example of her work.

This work is in the MacBride Museum collection. This carving represents the story of Àjana Zhaya. Julie Cruikshank describes the story in *Reading Voices*:

> Mrs. Smith herself started carving after she and her husband were living near the Wheaton River. This carving, which is 33 cm high, is made from popular, and Mrs. Smith calls it *Àjana Zhaya*, "Got Lost." When she talks about the carving, she tells Crow stories-particularly stories in which Crow makes elaborate promises and then disappears. One of the stories begins like this:

That big tree, popular tree, rotten inside. Crow cleans inside. He clean him.
"I'm going to fix some of you people yet."
"Ah," they say. "Always he talk too smart, that man."
Gone. He got lost!

The carving itself also got lost for many years, but is now in the McBride Museum, Whitehorse, Yukon. (Cruikshank 1991: 56, 57.)

Figure # 274, Àjana Zhaya carved by Kitty Smith. MacBride Museum, 73.1.106c.

Based on this story it appears that this is a carving of Crow while he is in his human form, which he turns to when desired or required. He is wearing an earring. He may have had an earring on his other ear, as there is a hole for it. It also appears as if Àjana Zhaya has no clothes on. This contrasts with the carving of Dukt'outl in figure # 276 where he is obviously wearing traditional style Yukon clothing. A possible explanation is that when Crow transforms into human form he would be naked, just like all animals that transform into human form. Likewise, whenever a person is transformed into an animal, all his or her clothes fall off.

In the next carving we can see Crow but in bird form. This piece is in the Klukshu Museum and represents a whale or possibly a giant fish with Crow on, or more likely just emerging from, the whale's back. This is from the story of Crow going inside the whale and then eats the whale's fat from the inside until he leaves through the whale's blowhole. In the interior version Crow gets inside the giant fish and then eats until he makes a hole through the giant fish and emerges from the fish that way.

Figure # 275, Kitty Smith carving. Klukshu Museum.

In *The Social Life of Stories* there is a narrative of the story by Kitty Smith:

Crow sees that whale, going like that..."Phewww, phewww" [imitating the whale alternately diving and blowing]. Way out there, eh? And he parked his boat and he looked at him.
"Gee," he said, "I wish I could be inside...I bet there's lots of fat in there."
Crow, he just loved fat. He wanted to eat fat, fat, fat all the time. So he said. "I know. When he goes...Pheww...I'll just jump in there. He'll suck me in."
Then he got inside his packsack, and he got lots of little wood. He breaks in all up and he put it inside his packsack. Filled it all up with wood-pitch wood, everything. Then he waits for it up there.
That whale came up just like that! Just as soon as that whale opened [his blowhole], he jumped inside! He just jumped inside that whale.
He stayed inside that whale, ate all the fat inside.
It's just like a big house!

> *Finally, he made a fire inside. Might as well kill it now, after I eat all the fat!*
> The story goes on to recount how Crow maneuvered the whale to shore and escaped through the hole in its back after people discovered the carcass and cut it open. He rested in comfort while they cut up the whale and began the laborious work of rendering grease from the carcass. He then tricked them into fleeing so that he ended up in possession of all the processed grease. (Cruikshank 1998: 109-110)

This story is a coastal version involving a whale but there are also a number of interior versions, such as Tommy McGinty's *Inside a suckerfish*. This story was published in Dominique Legros' *Story of Crow*. Another story, Jessie Jonathan's *The Crow and the Whale Fish*, was published in the Yukon native Language Centre's *Kwäday Kwändür***.** In these interior stories Crow is in fact inside a giant fish. Of course there are no whales in the interior but basically the stories are the same, most likely an interior adoption of the coastal version.
This work is very refined and has the traditional "repeating dot" motif that shows up in other examples of her work and throughout Yukon First Nations art. On the base of the carving is a repeating dot motif in the outline of what is obviously a fish. This makes me question, is the carving of a whale as it would be on the coast or is it a giant fish from the interior? Kitty Smith tells the coastal version of the story even though she is living in the interior. This would confirm that the carving is of a whale but she also engraved fish on the base. Does she do this to also represent the interior version of the story?
The following Kitty Smith carving is also at the MacBride Museum and is Dukt'outl, also known as Little Blackbird or Black Star. See figure # 276. Cruikshank has the story of Dukt'outl in *The Social Life of Stories*, again as told by Kitty's daughter May:

> The orphan Dukt'ootl', May says, was raised by an uncle but was belittled because of his low status. When a monster sea lion began to terrorize people, each adult male tried unsuccessfully to destroy him, but Dukt'ootl' was always dismissively left behind to tend fires. He trained secretly, becoming stronger and stronger. Finally Dukt'ootl' (sometimes called "Little Blackbird" because he was covered with soot from tending the fires of others) managed to destroy the behemoth and save camp. (Cruikshank 1998: 110)

In this carving Dukt'ootl' has either a hat or hair that is represented by moose teeth. If it is a hat, these may represent the feathers sticking out of his hat. They could also be feathers sticking out of his hair. It was common for First Nations people to wear hats that had plummets of woodpecker feathers stuck in them. Note the repeating dots on the figure. These were often used as part of the early Yukon First Nations geometric designs on tools and other items. In this case they appear to make up the patterns in Dukt'ootl's clothing, the common 'V' shaped breastband in the shirt and the common embroidered patterns that went down the front of the trouser.

Figure # 276, Dukt'outl carving by Kitty Smith. MacBride Museum, 73.1.106a.

I will make some additional comments about Kitty Smith's art work. Her work is simple and at the same time refined and meaningful. A great thing about Kitty Smith's carvings is that there is a definite link between the strong Yukon First Nations oral tradition and visual culture. Cruikshank echoes this in her statement in *The Social Life of Stories*:

> When I worked during the 1980s with Athapaskan and inland Tlingit elders on a project to develop high school curriculum materials for Yukon schools, two themes emerged repeatedly. First, elders spoke about the continuing importance of *words,* insisting that people still make use of long standing narrative traditions to think about social life. (...) Second, they pointed to the continuing importance of *things*-the visible, material heritage that is steadily vanishing over time-the traps, the snare, the many strategies people used to provide a life based on hunting, fishing, and trapping. They spoke about ceremonial clothing, the decorated tools, the small works of art that were part of everyday life. (Cruikshank 1998: 103.)

Kitty Smith was an artist that provided a link between the oral cultural past and present modern day society.

Kitty has also made carvings of people while in an animal state, for example two bears. The two bears represent the story of Kaats' being taken by the Bear Woman and Kaats' abandoning his wife and child. Kaats' becomes a member of the Bear people. Cruikshank has the story of Kaats' in her book *The Social Life of Stories* as described by Kitty's daughter May Smith Hume:

> The narrative traces the journey of Kaats', who accidentally stumbles into Bear Woman's world. She takes him to a separate dimension of reality, where she puts his former life behind him and is permanently transformed into a bear and absorbed into bear society. Broadly, the story depicts the ambivalent relations between bears and humans, a theme common to circumpolar subarctic narratives, and how animals and humans, with their conflicting and overlapping powers, share the world. (Cruikshank Cruikshank 1998: 108)

There are a number of other versions of this story. In Jessie Joe's, *The Bear Story***,** published in the Yukon native Language Centre's, *Kwäday Kwändür* it is a young girl who is taken by a bear. In David Dick's story, *The Woman Who Lived With the Grizzly Bear,* published in the Kaska tribal Council's *Dene Gudeji*, it is again a female who meets a man. She goes with him and ends up in the bear's world. The image in figure # 277 is of a human who has been transformed into a bear.

Figure # 277, Kitty Smith Kaats' bear carving. 73.1.106b, MacBride Museum.

Closing comments

This chapter gives a brief overview of some of the items that were used in rituals by shamans and other members of the community and the art that was created to depict a story. There are other ritual artifacts that I have examined during my research but did not include in this chapter since I mainly focused on the most common ritual artifacts. As for the shaman's art, some examples are common, such as the bone armbands and they were used by other people as well. Out of seven, the bone armband in figure # 252 is the only one identified as having belonged to a shaman's. Reason for discussing all the armbands together is to keep unity in the chapters. There is also a lack of other shaman artefact, such as the drums and masks. This is partly due to the secrecy around these objects and the practice of burying objects with the shaman after he died. Some of these shaman examples were stolen from the shaman's grave. Some of the articles would have been traded, either directly from the shaman or through another person. There have been no shaman artifacts made in the Yukon for at least the last fifty years, because the last Yukon shamans passed away in the 1950s and 1960s.

I have discussed some of story related art as I will in the next and later chapters. There must have been many other examples of story and history related art but unfortunately most of these artefacts and/or the possible relation to stories are lost. Lack of commonality (versus individuality) in representing art by the Yukon First Nations artists also plays a role.

Chapter Seven-Art of the Hunt & War

Introduction

In this chapter I will examine the art on items that were used for hunting and warfare. Generally speaking, weapons used in the hunt were also used for warfare. I will examine items, such as drums, arrow quivers and bone charms that have hunt or warfare scenes on them. There is enough information about hunting techniques in the various ethnographic books about Yukon First Nations, so I won't comment on these. I will however give a brief overview about Yukon First Nations and surrounding area warfare, since there is very little written about this subject. I have not seen examples of the style of warfare from other areas of North America.

Brief overview of Yukon First Nations methods of warfare

Athapaskan and Tlingit people in the Yukon region made war by using two main methods; the first was a sneak attack early in the morning, the second was the raid to capture wives and/or slaves. With the sneak attack there was no small build up of retaliations or raids, no warning, no facing the enemy in the field of battle. The warfare was simply to kill everybody in the camp right away to prevent people killed on the attacker's side and any type of retaliation. This attack was done early in the morning when all the people in the camp were sleeping to ensure the greatest chance of success. Most wars were an act of retaliation from a mistreatment, revenge a murder or counter a raid, but it was also to prevent a future retaliation. The second type of warfare was raids and these were not designed to kill people but to capture them. The targets were often women to be taken for slaves or wives. The raid to get slaves was launched at a time when there was little protection for the camp, for instance when all the able bodied men were away hunting. The coming retaliation could be prevented by using stealth for a clean get away. The camp's men would return to find their camp raided and the women gone and if the raiders were skillful enough the camp's men would not be able to find their escape route and track them. There are stories from various groups that tell about captured women being able to leave a trail and help the camp's men to track the raiders. The camp's men would then conduct an early morning attack to kill all the raiders and free their women. There are also stories about girls or women vanishing. When the search could not find them they were thought to be stolen by Bushmen, the term of Yukon First Nations people for the Sasquatch. In one story two girls vanished from Klukshu in the southern Yukon. When the girls could not be found they were believed to have been taken by Bushmen. Yet years later, when some Klukshu people travelled to Carcross, they saw those girls with the Tahltan people and realized that the Tahltan had stolen them. This occurred after the arrival of the white man and the wars had ceased, so there was no counter raid.

Wars were not common and as a result little was later written about the early conflicts. With the already small populations in the region wars were deeply thought about before any action was taken. Some of the wars were an attack on a large group of people while at other times the attack was on a small group. When the attack concerned a single family it was considered murder rather than war. When war was decided upon, the men would do the required rituals in order to alter the mind set, so they would become capable of killing other humans. Without the rituals there was a high chance of getting killed in the upcoming battle. Shamans were consulted and were an integral part during the duration of the war. They forecasted the outcome, were able to locate the enemy camp, and so on. The man who had most experience or was the bravest would be chosen as the war chief. He planned and led the attack.

In my research I have come across a number of wars, some that have been published and others that I heard about from Elders. An example of published wars included the two Ahtna-Russian encounters during two Russian expeditions heading up the Copper River into Ahtna territory in 1794-95. Russians in the first expedition were killed off because of how badly they abused the Ahtna people. People in the second Russian expedition in 1848 were also killed, even though they treated the Ahtna people with respect. The cause for this misfortune was the great fear the Ahtna people had of any possible retaliation from the Russians. Another published Ahtna war is about a story that involved a camp of Bushmen who were called the Cet'aenn. Athapaskans do believe in Bushmen, better known as Sasquatches. While the Sasquatch remains unproven in today's scientific milieu, there are many First Nations stories about Bushmen. I have never seen a bushman personally, but know three First Nations people in the south-central Yukon who said they have seen Bushmen. In the story the Cet'aenn murdered an Ahtna man and was using his head as a football. The Ahtna attacked in the best possible situation: their shaman made it rain and caused all the Cet'aenn to go into their dens to avoid getting wet. That way the Ahtna could approach the Cet'aenn camp without being seen and set the Cet'aenn dens on fire. In this manner the Ahtna were able to kill all the Bushmen. There were also a number of Tanana wars. One of these wars was against people who invaded their territory from down the Tanana River. The offending group raided the Tanana camp, killing everybody except for the two women they took with them as slaves. The Tanana women escaped and returned to their own camp. There they found ten Tanana men who were from their camp but were out hunting when the attack happened. Since the ten were too few to attack they went to other Tanana camps and gathered a force of three to five hundred warriors. This force then followed and caught up to the raiding force. They attacked and killed all the raiders.

A well known war is the Dezadeash Massacre, also known as "Last Indian War". In this attack the Snag people (Upper Tanana) and allies (who may have included the Tancross people as well as Northern Tutchone people) massacred all the Southern Tutchone people that were camped at Dezadeash Lake. This happened in retaliation for the abuse and death of one of their women who was taken against her will by the Southern Tutchone chief Laan. An older man saw the war party when he was gathering firewood. He tried to warn Laan but he was dismissed as being lazy and trying to get out of gathering firewood. After the chief's response he left with his child. Another woman survived by hiding under hides. One Snag man was killed during the attack because he refused to take part in the war rituals. Right after the Snag people had killed everybody, they fled the area. They believed that either a Southern Tutchone war party was coming to attack them, since there were other Southern Tutchone camps nearby, or that ghosts were coming since they heard hollering. In fact, it was the old man returning and shouting if anybody was there. See figure # 278 of my drawing of the massacre scene at Dezadeash Lake. This war is also well known to the people in the surrounding areas, such as the eastern most Southern Tutchone, Tlingit and Athna. The attack is believed to have taken place around 1838-1840.

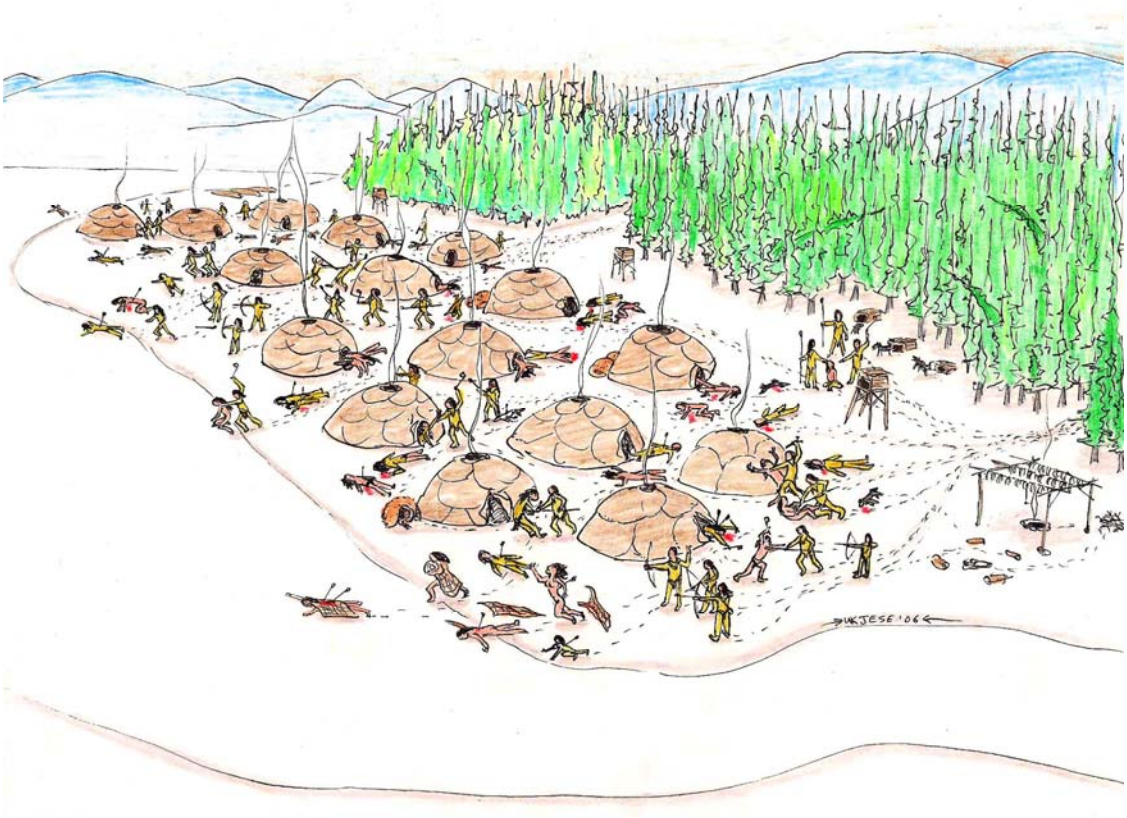


Figure # 278. Dezadeash Lake massacre. UvK drawing.

Another war that has little written material is the annihilation of the original Pelly River people by the Laird River people. The void left by the Pelly River people was filled by the Francis Lake Kaska and Northern Tutchone people. There were also a series of raids back and forth between the Inland Tlingit and the Tahltan. These raids eventually lead to the Tahltan people being displaced by the Inland Tlingit in the southern Yukon.

There are a couple of unwritten wars relayed to me by Northern and Southern Tutchone Elders. An example is the Lake Lebarge massacre. When I was a teenager nobody seemed to know anything about the event. When I asked Elders about the Lake Lebarge massacre, they had never heard about it. One day Elder Irene Smith mentioned the Nalin War and I inquired about it. This turned out to be the Lake Lebarge massacre but the Elders only knew it as the Nalin War. In this case a Lake Lebarge man killed five Tlingit traders and stole their trade items when they were returning from the north from a late summer-early fall trading trip. He killed them at the base of Nalin Mountain, which is also known as "Look-out Mountain". A sixth man escaped and made it back to the coast. In the following years that man returned to the north on trading trips with his people and always had the intention of retaliation. The local Lake Lebarge people knew about the killings and were afraid of retaliation so they would hide whenever they knew that the Tlingit traders were passing by the Nalin-Lake Lebarge area. For a number of years the Lake Lebarge people were successful at hiding from the Tlingits but just as the Tlingits were about to give up on the idea of retaliation, their shaman on Nalin Mountain saw smoke off in the distance. They attacked the Lake Lebarge people's camp at Swan Lake early next morning and killed everybody. The void that was left at Lake Lebarge was later filled by Hutshi and Tagish Kwan people.

Another unpublished war was Chief Kwan'tuk's War. In this case a coastal Tlingit trading party travelled to Ess Lake in Northern Tutchone territory to conduct trade. Things turned sour and the Tlingit killed the chief Northern Tutchone trader during negotiations

following which the Tlingits were driven away by the Northern Tutchone. After being driven out by the Northern Tutchone, the Tlingits no longer returned to Ess Lake to trade. The Ess Lake Northern Tutchone people found this to their disadvantage and decided to send an expedition to Tlingit territory in an effort to restart trading. The Tlingit learned of the expedition and ambushed the group. They killed them all with the exception of Kwan'tuk. Kwan'tuk was so badly wounded that they just left him, believing he would die. Kwan'tuk however lived and managed to return to Northern Tutchone territory. There he became chief because of surviving such an ordeal. Kwan'tuk then raised an army and set an ambush for the Tlingits. The ambush was conducted at Five-Finger Rapids and was successful. The Northern Tutchone captured all the Tlingits in the trading party. The Northern Tutchone later let the survivors return to the coast with warnings. This mercy was unusual but was probably planned in order to allow trade to resume, which indeed happened some time later.

The Tanaina style of warfare was also an exception to the normal practice of killing everybody. The Tanaina would attack, kill some and let the others escape to allow them to return to their people. It was believed that the escapees would inform their folk on the toughness of Tanaina warriors, thereby deter future attacks. With the Athapaskan method of sneak attacks, regular hunting weapons would be sufficient. There was no need for any specialty weapons, body armour, helmets and shields.

Daggers

Knives were the most common weapons and were also used in cutting animals and hides, hunting, bear defence and carving. I will not be discussing the knives for everyday use nor carving knives although you can see an example of a carving knife in figure # 36 on page 67. Of the remaining knives and daggers there are two types; metal and bone. The metal daggers were first made out of native copper and were later replaced with steel. These were made from traded tool steel or steel and iron files. There were two main styles of metal daggers; double pommel and single pommel. The pommel was in the form of a swirl motif coming out of the handle of the dagger. The common style metal dagger had twin pommels at the end of the handle and was used throughout the Yukon, Alaska and the Northwest Territories. The second style metal dagger was the single pommel which was also used over a wide area. These knives were unique to the northern Athapaskan territories in northern-western North America. I am not aware of these knife styles used anywhere else in the world. The other type of knife was made out of bone. The two main types are the small animal skinning knives that were often called gopher skinning knives and bone daggers used in bear defence, and possibly, combat. Examples of the gopher skinning knives can be seen in figures # 38 and # 41 on page 69 & # 42 on page 70. I will not be discussing the gopher skinning knives in this chapter but will look at a bone dagger later in this chapter.

Metal daggers:

As just mentioned, the common style metal dagger was made with twin pommels at the end of the handle and was used throughout the Yukon, Alaska and the Northwest Territories. The second style metal dagger was the single pommel. Sometimes these daggers had geometric markings on them and, as in the case of the knife from Aishihik, floral designs (figure # 287 on page 283). See figure # 279 for two examples of these copper daggers that are in the Alaska State Museum in Juneau.

Figure # 279, Double pommel copper knives at the Alaska State Museum. Left: II-C-294. Right: II-C-69. ASM

The dagger on the top has a series of engraved lines on the ridge as well as in the pommels. The large dagger on the bottom is almost like a small sword. It is rare to see any type of knife this large, 50% larger than the commonly sized dagger above. The dagger on the top is around one foot in length. Some daggers are smaller but rarely are they larger. The handles are wrapped in hide and the side of the blade that you can see has a ridge which is absent on the other side. The regular sized daggers were often carried in a sheath that hung around the neck and rested on the chest of the man. Early drawings also show the dagger tucked into a belt about the waist. See Murray's drawings in *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* on pages 68 and 71.

Another dagger in the Canadian Museum of Civilization was collected by E.E. Stockton in the Dawson City area between 1901 and 1906. This would make it either a Han dagger or it was traded to the Han by a group that made the copper daggers, such as the Tutchone. See figure # 280. The note on the museum card states:

> The dagger is probably made from a single piece of metal. Metal surfaces are intentionally stained a dull brownish colour, possibly with fish oil (Witthoft and Eyman 1969:15), to produce a corrosion-resistant surface. The blade shows small irregular voids carried over from natural copper. (...) Used as a hunting implement more than as a fighting weapon. Witthaft 1969:22 suggests pommel on such daggers used as tool to separate hide from carcass in skinning game.

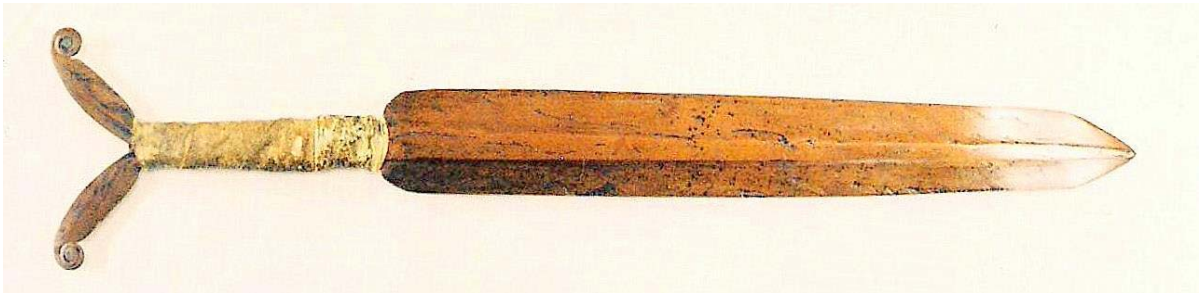


Figure # 280, copper knife from the Dawson City area. VI-F-16, CMC.

In the Royal Ontario Museum the card for the same type of knife listed as Tutchone states:

> Leaf-shaped outline. Concavo-convex section. Short, broad, flat handle. A killing knife for wounded animals, carried around neck or belt. Collected by a Chilkat Indian about the Hootchi river. Produced by interior Dene on the headwaters of the Stikhine, Taku, Yukon and White rivers. Recd. 6/23/39" HK2327, ROM.

There are illustrations of Athapaskan hunters killing swimming moose from their canoe using only these copper daggers. See figure # 281 of an engraving from a Frederick Whymper sketch of June 1867. This engraving was copied by Yan 'Dargent in 1869 for the *Le Tour du* Monde, a French illustrated magazine. Whymper was an artist who also travelled a great deal in north-western North America in the 1860s. Along the way he made many sketches including this one on the Yukon River above the mouth of the Dall River. Dall River is located on the Yukon River about half way between Fort Yukon and the Tanana River mouth which is in Koyukon territory. There is a similar engraving that is shown in the Handbook of the American Indian, Volume 6 on page 536 and the caption states that these are either Koyukon or Tanana hunters.

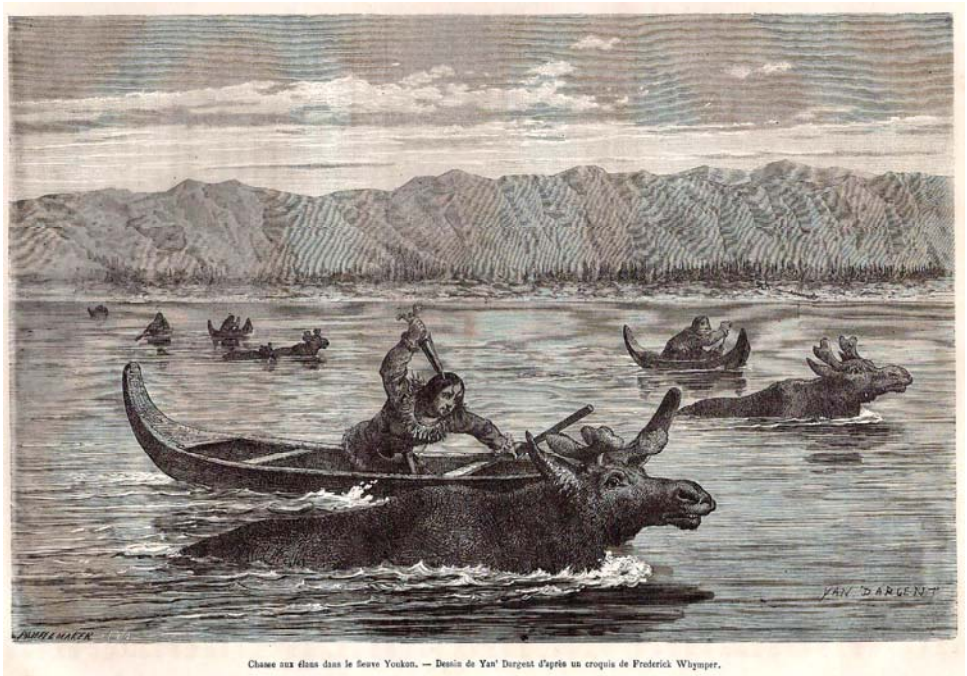


Figure # 281. 1869 Yan 'Dargent engraving after Frederick Whymper sketch of June 1867. UvK Collection.

In the above image the hunter is stabbing the moose and in this next illustration the hunter is cutting the throat of the moose. The location is just at the Yukon-Alaska border so this would be a Han hunter image. This was in the days when hunting was up close and personal! The image is from page 261 in Schwatka's *Along Alaska's Great River.*

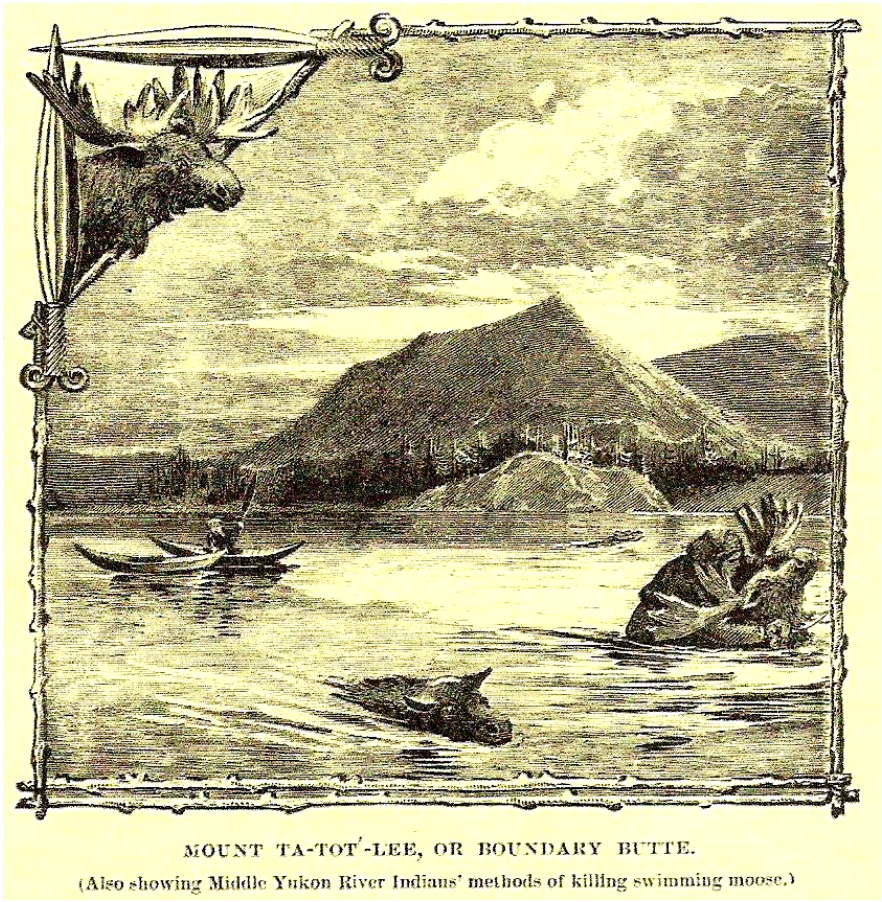


Figure # 282. Han hunter killing moose on the Yukon River. *Along Alaska's Great River*, page 261.

In the following image in figure # 283 is my drawing of the double pommel knife attached to a pole, thus becoming a spear. These spears were used for bear defence and warfare.

Figure # 283. Illustration of knife-spear combination. UvK drawing.

This combined knife-spear is described in *My Old People Say* on page 290 in the following manner:

> The Southern Tutchone used to tie long copper knives onto wooden shafts and use them as bear spears or battle weapons. A Southern Tutchone granddaughter of the famous Copper Chief of White River eloquently explained how effectively a man might cut off anybody's head with such a weapon. (McClellan 2001: 289)

For bear defense Yukon First Nations also used bone knives such as the example in figure # 43 on page 70. While the above statement is a Southern Tutchone example the range of these daggers covered the rest of the Yukon, northern British Columbia, the interior of Alaska and at least the western part of the Northwest Territories. All followed the general pattern of a dagger with a hide wrapped handle and double spiral pommels.

There are a few variations of the standard double pommel knife. In the Peter the Great Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, is a dagger on display that has a ridge with raised edges as well as a very distinct pointed blade. See the top knife in figure # 284. Next is a version of the double pommel dagger that is in the Anchorage Museum and it lists this as an interior Alaska bear spear head. This dagger would have been intended to be attached to a pole. Note that the handle is wider than other knives and the pommels do not end in swirls. These are steel daggers and would have been made after trade was established with the Russian American Trading Company.

Figure # 284, Versions of double pommel copper daggers. Top: Dagger from the Peter the Great Museum. Bottom: Dagger from Anchorage Museum.

The following dagger in figure # 285 was collected from the Tlingit by the early Spanish explorers sometime between 1776 and 1800. It is listed as Tlingit but has distinct interior traits, such as the blade design and a double pommel. While the pommels do not end in swirls we can see that the interior Alaska made knife on the bottom in figure # 284 also does not end in swirls. The museum information lists that this dagger was produced in Canada, which would suggest the interior, since the Tlingits along the coast are all in Alaska and they obtained copper knives from the interior. It appears that this dagger was either traded from the interior or was made by the Tlingits, but influenced by interior dagger designs. Another interesting thing about this dagger is that the museum notes state that it is made of iron or steel. The Museum notes in Spanish list the material as “hierro”. This

indicates that at least the coastal Tlingits and possibly the interior people were using iron or steel to create knives possibly as early as 1776 and for sure by 1800. This begs the question, where did the iron or steel come from? I would suggest via the trade networks from Siberia.

Figure # 285. Tlingit used dagger made in Canada. 01595. Museo de América

There is a second dagger in the museum that is very interesting to me. It has a face in the butt of the handle but has the exact blade as the dagger above. As you see in figure # 286, the face is of simple design and not done in the typical Tlingit Northwest Coast Indian, but more Athapaskan-like art style. It is unusual since I have seen no other heads on Athapaskan knives. There was very little collected from the interior until the late 1800s and early 1900s and these daggers are some of the earliest possible interior artifacts collected. Other examples of daggers with faces on them may be lost in time. Also, if these daggers are Athapaskan then it may support the theory some researchers have suggested, which is that Athapaskan knives influenced Tlingit knife making. Since the copper knives came from the interior and had faces on them, such as in figure # 286, then who is not to say that the Tlingits adopted the tradition of placing heads on their daggers. They would create these heads in their own Tlingit style.

Figure # 286. Tlingit knife. 01596. Museo de América

The second most common knife style is the single pommel knife. There are examples of the single pommel knife in several museum collections. An interesting example is at the Canadian Museum of Civilization and was collected from Aishihik which is Southern Tutchone territory. See figure # 287 of a photograph of the knife. This knife was collected in the summer of 1911 from Taylor and Drury in Whitehorse by D.D. The knife is reported to come from Aishihik and Catherine McClellan feels that this knife was made by Chief Isaac: "I suspect the knife was made by old Chief Isaac, father of the present chief." If this is the case then it is my third great-grand father who made this knife. Unique to these knives are the engraved designs on both sides of the blade. There is a stylized motif one side and a leaf

spray on the other. When examining this knife I noticed that the motif side had gone over, re-engraving the earlier design. I suspect that when the knife was purchased by Taylor and Drury, they themselves or the owner re-engraved the design to make it stand out better. They missed some lines which revealed the earlier engraving. Also note the initials 'JRX' engraved in the blade. Were these the initials of the person who bought the knife, one of the owners of the knife, or the person who made it? If the maker was JRX then he was not old Chief Isaac. Or are the initials JR and then an "X"? During the time that Chief Isaac was alive in the early 19th century they were not using initials on artifacts. This practice did not start until the end of the 19th century and ended in the early 20th century.

There are different approaches to the designs on each side of the blade. The design on the top view is a mix of floral patterns and possibly a head of an animal. On the other side is a leaf spray that is in the same style as beaded leaf designs. Why the engraver decided to use a beaded design on the knife is anybody's guess. The person may have had the design on some part of his clothing and decided to use the same on the knife. The design on the other side is unique and I can only guess at what the images may represent. The head on this knife reminds me of the heads on the carved animals in figure # 197 on page 207 and the painted animal on the drum in figure # 264 on page 257. The image at the tip of the dagger could be a beaver. The cross hatched pattern at the bottom represents the tail of the beaver in the same way the Northwest Coast Indians depict their beavers. This may represent Beaverman, also known as Asuya, who, along with Crow, made the world safe for the humans. If this is indeed Asuya, then the bottom figure may be a highly stylized Crow. Another idea is that the whole top figure is a face with its eyes along the edge. Under this design is a smaller leaf spray and below that is yet another image, which I think might also be part of a face. In *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* McClellan wrote:

> From the same site came two nice bone tools for skinning small animals. One is broken, but their elongated shapes and notched ends are reminiscent of the thousand-year-old bone flesher from Old Crow found by Peter Lord. These tools are smaller, though, and each has a design incised in it with a metal implement. Aishihik Indians of the 1960s saw in one of these designs a giant woodworm-a creature that the Coast Tlingit say was raised by a girl at Klukwan. Aishihik people of Bennett Lake times probably learned the story from the Coast Tlingit with whom they used to trade. (McClellan 1987: 58-59)

This story is told in the button blanket section of this thesis in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death. Maybe the artist made the design to represent another story.

Figure # 287, Southern Tutchone knife with single pommel from Aishihik. VI-Q-32, CMC. UvK drawing.

An example of what appears to be a small dagger that would be attached to a pole for bear defence was discovered at the old Nalin War site just a few miles north of Whitehorse. I was told about this knife by Jim Robb, a local artist and historian, who had seen and examined it after it was found on the ground by a local First Nations Elder. It was identified as an early copper knife by Chief Albert Isaac and was held in a sheath and worn around the neck, either at the chest or the side under the arm. The knife looks very much like a spear point yet is first thought of as a knife by Chief Albert Isaac. Chief Albert Isaac is the son of the above mentioned Chief Isaac. There are no photographs of this knife nor have I come across any similar knives. I have seen a Tutchone knife that is about the same size and is shown below in the drawing in figure # 288. This small copper knife has a single pommel that does not spread to the side like the dagger in figure # 287 above. See the top knife in figure # 284 of my drawing of the small copper knife from the Nalin battle site based on Jim Robb's drawing and the bottom photograph of the small copper Tutchone knife at the Field Museum.

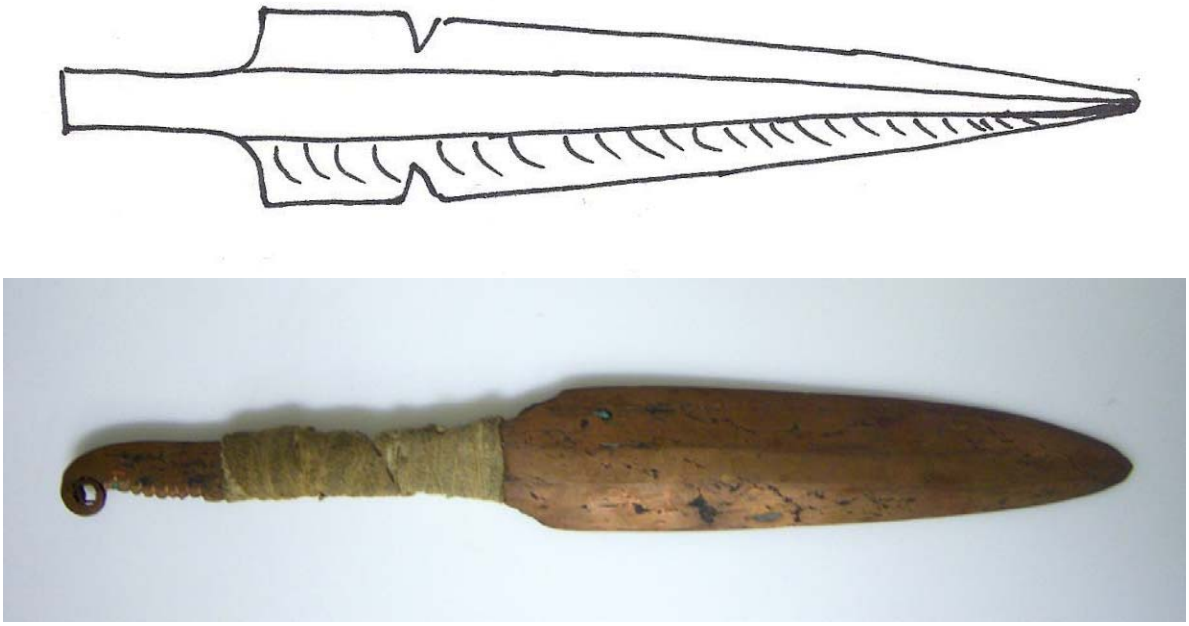


Figure # 288, Top: Small Southern Tutchone copper knife. UvK drawing. Bottom: Small Tutchone copper knife. 1925.1595.051707, Field Museum.

The Nalin War knife was donated to the MacBride Museum in the 1970s and was, together with other artifacts, stolen from the museum shortly afterwards. Since it is a smaller knife I wonder if this was a woman's knife. This may have been more practical for general use and also have the option of being attached to a pole for bear defense. I suspect that these knives were not as common as the larger double pommel knife. Furthermore, being a 'woman's knife', there may have been less interest in collecting them.

The other copper knife in # 288 is listed as Tutchone and has the same general appearance as a copper knife in figure # 289 that was collected on Victoria Island in Arctic Canada. This places that other copper knife in Inuit territory. Edward Rodgers in' *An Athapaskan Type of Knife* states he thinks this knife is Eskimo, made from a group that was somewhere between Baillie Island of the Arctic coast in the Northwest Territories and northern Alaska. He also noted that there was an active knife trading network with knives produced in the areas with a copper source and then traded out. There is also a source of copper on Victoria Island. Since I have seen other Athapaskan knives in this style I would not discount that the knife below is of Athapaskan manufacture and then traded to the Inuit. A more detailed study into Inuit knives would help solve this question. The knife is presently in the Royal Ontario Museum collection.

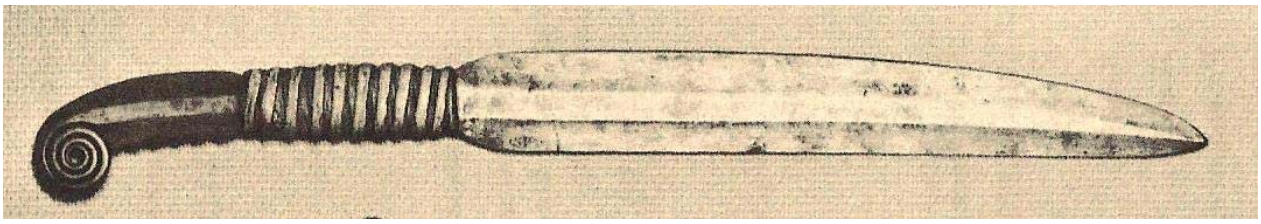


Figure # 289. Copper knife collected in Victoria Island, Northwest Territories. 920.70.11, ROM.

The next knife makes a good transition to bone daggers. It is in the Museum of the American Indian collection in Washington DC and was purchased by the museum in 1914. There is little provenance but it is listed as Athapaskan. From the style it is certainly an Athapaskan knife. In figure # 290 you can see that the blade is made of steel and is done in the typical Athapaskan dagger style. The handle on the other hand is made of bone but is styled with a double pommel, the same as the daggers discussed above. Note that one pommel tip is broken off.

Figure # 290, Steel and bone dagger. Athapaskan. 036710.000, NMAI.

While I believe that this knife is made from a steel file I believe many steel daggers were made from bars of traded tool steel. Starting before the 1740s tool steel was manufactured in Sheffield and was a very common trade item. It was sold and traded just like other products, such as flour, crockery, etc. The present literature, museum notes, etc. about Athapaskan daggers state that they were made out of traded steel files. The above knife may be an example of a knife made out of a file since the maker of this dagger used the tang, the pointed end of the file, to fit the bone handle. This would be an obvious choice since the purpose of the tang was to fit a handle to make the use of the file easier for the worker.

However, most of the daggers have double pommels coming out of the handle and I would imagine that working with bars of traded tool steel would be easier than working with traded files. I am amazed at the skill Athapaskan people had in converting flat pieces of steel into knives, using only material found in nature! It must have taken a great deal of determined work and time.

Bone daggers

Besides the bear defense bone dagger that is shown in figure # 43 on page 70 there is another type of bone dagger that has been collected in the Yukon. This is a type of dagger that appears to be intended for combat only. It cannot be used for cutting, is too awkward to use for skinning small animals and cannot be easily attached to a pole to be used as a spear. These daggers look very much like the Northwest Coast Indian bone daggers. An example is in the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia's collection. See the dagger and head detail in figure # 291. This knife is listed as Northern Tutchone and was collected by Frank Burnett along the Yukon River between 1920 and 1927. It has an animal carved into the handle which has coastal Tlingit motifs. While this knife may have been traded to the interior, it could be argued that this is in fact a Southern Tutchone knife, as the Southern Tutchone were influenced by the Chilkat Tlingits. Since this carving is not as fine as coastal Tlingit carved items, one could speculate that it was made by a Southern Tutchone man who had a lot of exposure to the Chilkat Tlingits and then traded the dagger to the Northern

Tutchone. There are a couple of other artifacts collected in the Yukon which look like very crude Northwest Coast Indian art, such as the pipe in figure # 250 on page 245 which I assume were made by Southern Tutchone artists. The knife collected by Frank Burnett did not have the strict Tlingit style of rendering the eye and had the "U" shape coming back from the eye. This design is like the basic coastal Tlingit motif, but the lines do not connect and the eye is not a true ovoid. As for the type of head, the Elders thought it could be a number of different animals. One suggestion was the giant worm that was raised by the girl as mentioned earlier with the Aishihik knife in figure # 287 on page 283. One Elder thought it might be a fish, especially if it was made in the Klukshu area.

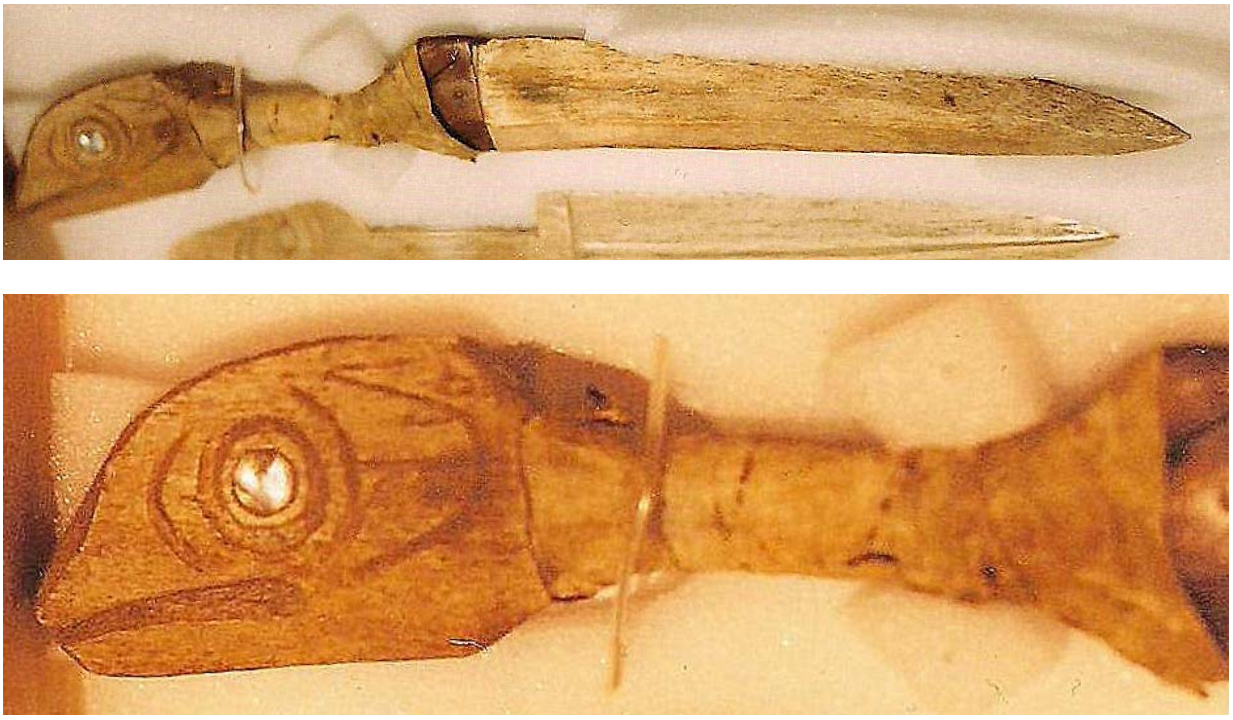


Figure # 291, Top: Bone dagger with an animal head designed into the handle. Bottom: detail of head design. A2.607, MOA, UBC.

The knife is made up of various materials. It is bone with abalone inlay in the eye and has leather, copper and wood on it.

Arrow, dart & spear points

There are many examples of arrow, dart and spear points. Because of the recent ice patch discoveries in the southern Yukon, I have been able to examine examples of bone points that date back about 9000 years. In the collection are various technologies used for the micro blade which have not been in use for at least the last 3000 years and some think longer, for at least 4500 or 5000 years. Micro blades are small sharp blades made out of stone that are about a quarter inch wide by one and a half inches long and very thin (7 x 40 x 2.5 mm). The micro blades were inserted in grooves of tools and in bone and antler arrow points. Micro blades were replaced with notched pointed technology. Notched points are stone arrow or throwing dart points that have notches near the base. This way the points could be easily tied to the ends of wooden arrows or throwing dart shafts. This change, along with other major technological changes, led archeologists to believe that a new people came into the area and displaced the established people. About 1200 years ago, bow and arrows replaced

the throwing darts rather quickly. The bow and arrows were in use until replaced by rifles in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Personally I question whether a technological change means that one cultural group of people moved in and replaced or displaced another already established group of people. Athapaskans had to be very adaptable in order to survive in such a harsh climate so if a new technology arrived in the area via trade or intermarrying, that new technology would have spread rapidly. And who is not to say that the existing people did not develop the new technology themselves?

Oldest example of Yukon First Nations art

On one micro blade piece of approximately 8000 years old, we find a motif. See in figure # 292 my sketch of the point and what this point may have looked like when it was in original use. This piece is a bone or antler with a thin groove around the outside edge so that the micro blades can fit into it to produce the cutting edge. There is a motif on one side of the point which has no practical function but symbolizes something or is a decoration. When I checked H.W. Janson's third edition of *History of Art*, I find that this single piece suggests that the art from the south-central Yukon is extremely old. South-central art is older than Celtic art (600 AD), Greek art (650 BC), and even ancient Egyptian art (3000 BC). We are dealing with the same timeline as the European Neolithic art from about 6000 BC. As you can see in the figure, the design is a simple series of repeating shapes that is copied on the other side of the center line. The point was straightened when made, but over the thousands of years the antler has returned to its original, natural shape. Many of the antler points that I will show have undergone the same changes. I have not come across another identical motif in my research, but I have seen similar ones. See figure # 293 for an example of a similar motif on a bone gopher skinning knife. While not exact, the two motifs do have a similarity that may give some connection in the reasons for creating the motif. The meaning of either motif is unknown, but they may be close enough to be linked, just like a First Nations story of which the basic contents are the same but the details different dependent on the region. This gopher skinning blade is from the Klukshu Museum.

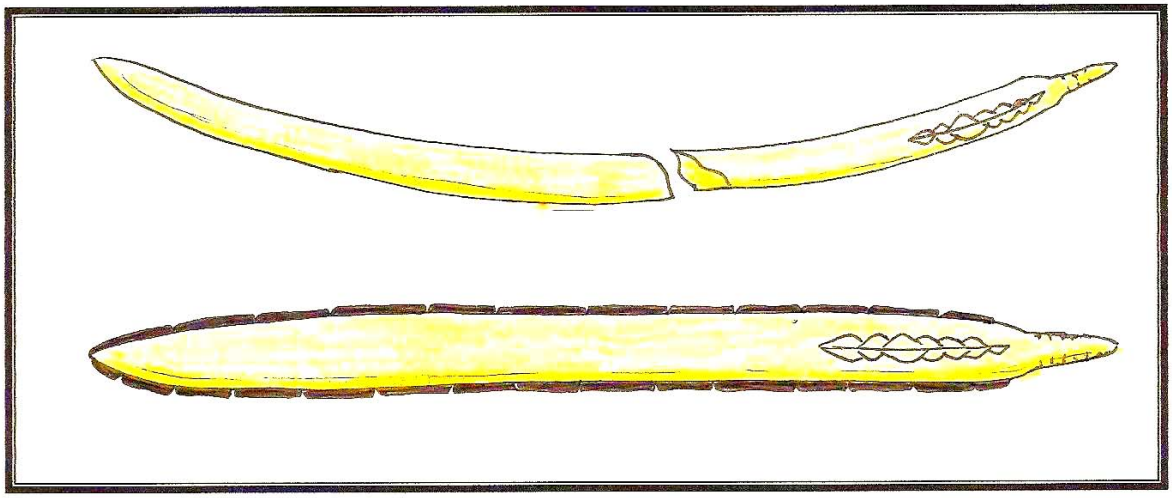


Figure # 292, Micro blade throwing dart point as it looks now and how it would have appeared when made with the micro blades inserted in the groove around the edge. 7310 $\pm$ 40BP. JHV1-1:1, IPC. UvK drawing.

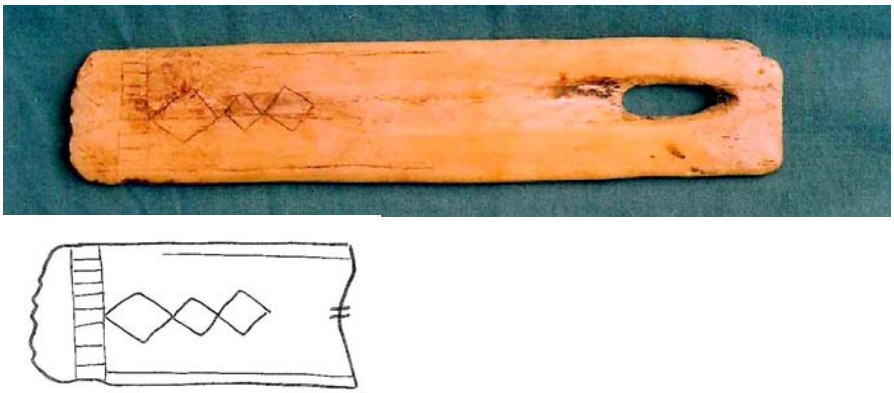


Figure # 293, Gopher skinning blade with motif, Klukshu Museum. UvK drawing.

Arrow & atlatl points

The following is a series of photographs and drawings of notched points made of bone and antler. In my conversations with Greg Hare, the Yukon Government archeologist, we noted that no two are alike and it seems that different blood lines (blood lines are those lines engraved into the point to facilitate the bleeding of the animal), barbs (which work their way inside the animal as they walk, which weakens them so they finally have to lay down to rest) and other carved details made very little or no difference to the effectiveness of the point. It seems that five or six barbs would do the job required, but there are many with more and some with fewer barbs. Note the very fine detailing and individual styling, such as the top point in figure # 294, where the maker engraved a series of stylized blood lines. This piece is undated. In my drawing of the middle bone point shows a very simple overall design. This point is about 4000 years old and because of total lack of decoration and makes me think it was hastily made, having no time to add additional bloodlines, bards or other decorations. Perhaps he was low on atlatl points and needed more for the hunt and then made only what was the very simplest point capable of doing the job. Or maybe it may not even a weapon point at all but another type of tool. I will now examine a more complex two-piece point shown at the bottom in figure # 294. This object is not dated. A smaller bone tip was attached to the larger bone point, but that larger piece itself would be efficient without the attached piece. Yet the maker decided to do something different. See figure # 295 for a variety of shapes of points. They illustrate a wide range of styles.

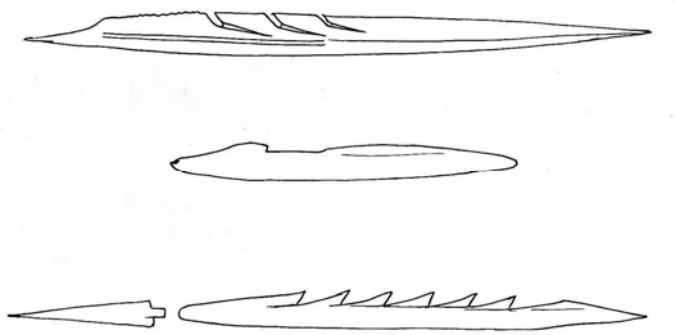


Figure # 294, note the blood line design. JgVe 1:3, IPC. very basic point. JcUu-1:23, IPC. two piece point. JiUl-1:1, IPC. UvK drawing.

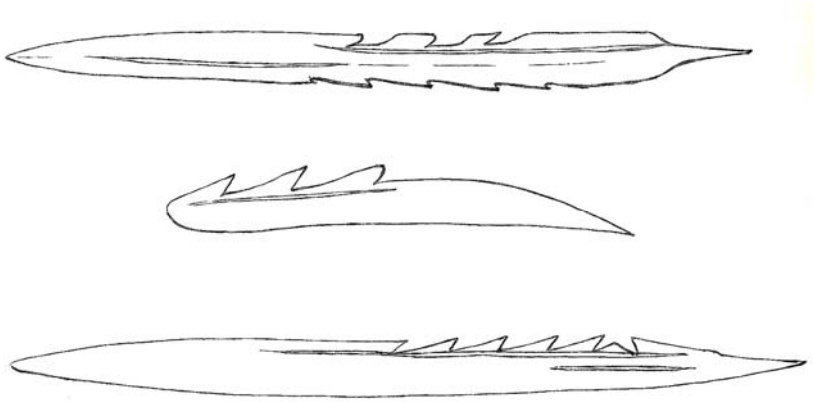


Figure # 295, a series of points, top: JbVb-1:2, 360 ± 40 BP, middle: JgVe-1:1, 660 ± 40 BP, bottom: JhV1-4:3, undated. IPC. UvK drawings.

While there are no points in the Ice Patch Collection that have the "repeating dot" motif, there are examples in other collections. See figure # 296 for examples of the detachable barbed arrow points:

> The detachable barbed points are about eight inches long from tip to the base of the tang. They are barbed on one side only, and they, too, have been geometrically incised with lines and dots into which red ochre has been rubbed. (McClellan 2001: 283)

The "repeating dot" pattern is seen on all three examples.

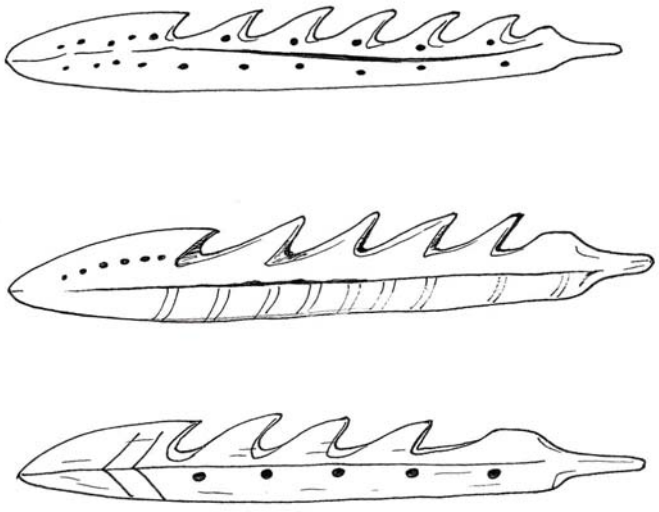


Figure # 296, detachable barbed points. UvK drawings adopted from *My Old People Say* page 285.

See figure # 297 for examples from McClellan's *My Old People Say*, on page 284, of common motifs on bunting heads of arrows: "There are three styles of head. They appear to be made of antler or bone, and each is incised with geometric designs into which red ochre is rubbed."

In these examples the "repeating dot" pattern is present in the top arrow head, along with a variation on the "repeating cone" pattern shown in the middle arrow head. The crisscross or variation of the zigzag can be seen in the bottom arrow head.

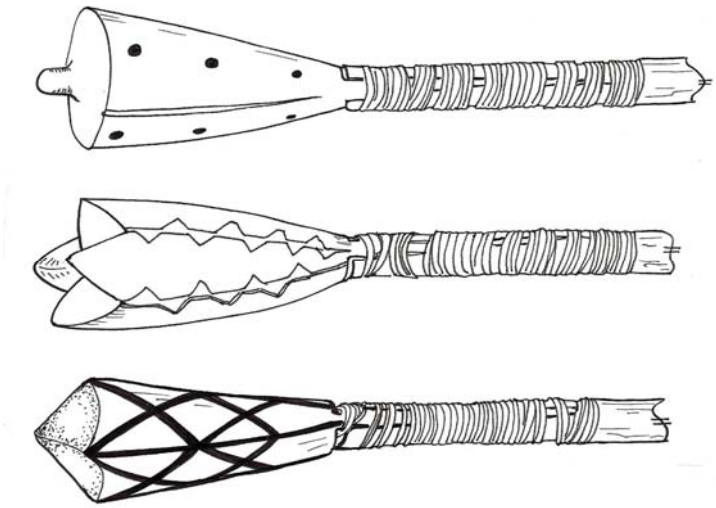


Figure # 297, hunting arrows. UvK drawings adopted from *My Old People Say* page 284.

The MacBride Museum also has this type of bunting head in their collection. See figure # 298 for their examples on display.

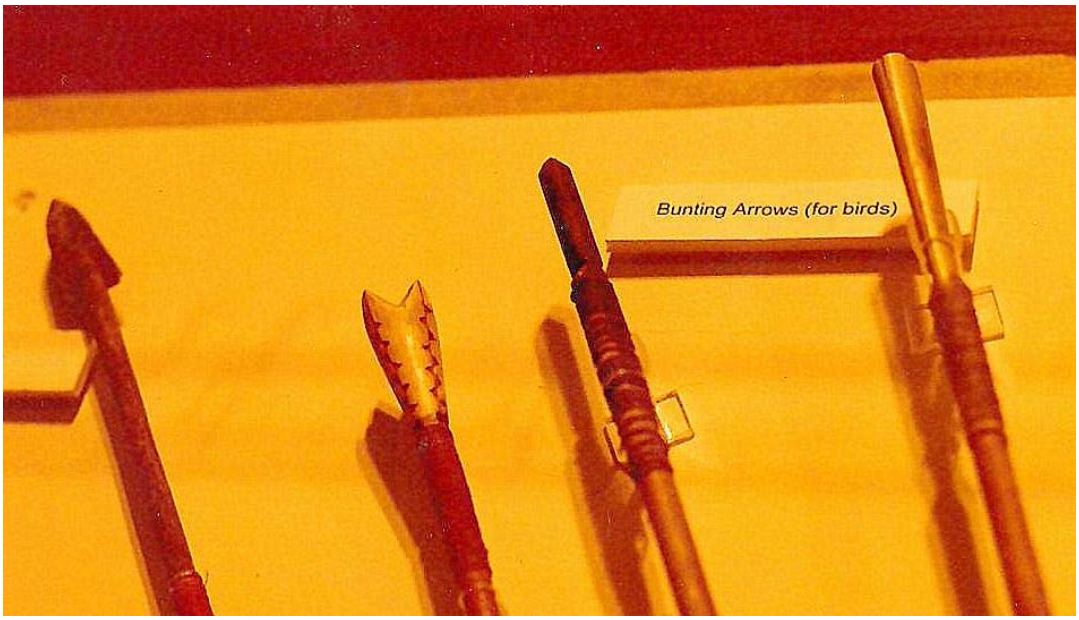


Figure # 298, note the bunting head second from the left, it has similar design to the middle bunting head in figure # 297. MacBride Museum.

There are some major design differences between the arrows and atlatl darts. The darts were designed to be heavier in the front and the feathers were simply attached close to the back to stabilize its flight. The darts were made mostly out of birch and some of spruce. Arrows, on the other hand, were made out of strips of mostly split spruce and some birch. The arrows were each carved so that the thickest, and thus the heaviest part, was in the center. The notch point was in the front and at the back, split feathers were attached. Some of the feathers have design notching in them in a zigzag pattern. In my conversations with Greg Hare about the flight characteristic of throwing darts and arrows, he stated that the notched feathers should not affect the flight characteristics at all. Since this is the case, these additional creative options give the maker a wider range of individual choices for the look of

the final product. As I noted earlier, the speaker's staff at the MacBride Museum also has notched feathers (figure # 166 page 187). Notching of feathers has been done for at least the last 5000 years.

The darts and arrows also have traces of red ochre. The oldest example with ochre is 6800 years old. I also examined some arrows that are less than 1200 years old. A personal pattern is applied for individuality and identification. Once the point detached itself into the animal, the arrow could have fallen to the ground. Found later, depending on where the marks were placed, one could have identified the owner of the arrow. The points were designed to work their way inside the animal to cause internal bleeding. The animal would flee and had to be tracked, but it would grow weaker and finally lie down. Once the animal was found and dispatched, the point would be recovered and through its decoration identify the hunter that made the kill. See figure # 299 for an example of a 440 year old arrow with a red ochre strip painted on the shaft.

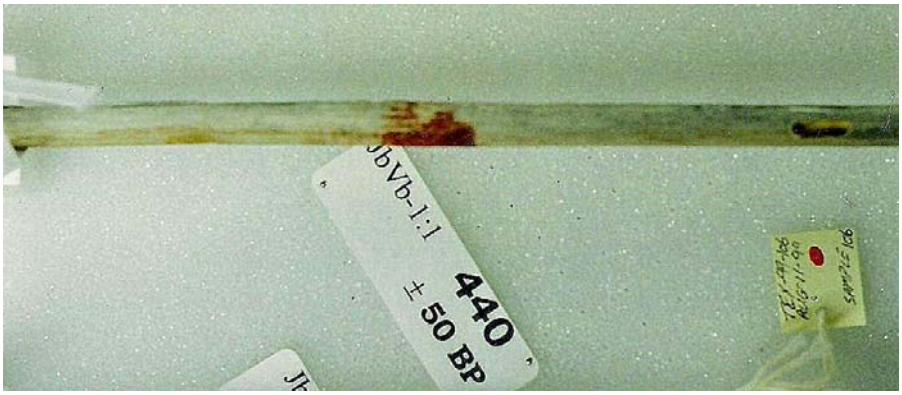


Figure # 299, JbVb-1:1, 440 + 50 BP, IPC.

In figure # 300 is an antler point that is approximately 4500 years old. Mr. Greg Hare felt that its long point was too big to fly through the air. He felt that the piece would be attached to a lance and may have been used to dispatch a wounded animal once the hunter was able to get up close to it. Yet, the long row of barbs does not make sense, as these barbs would inhibit the smooth thrusting and withdrawing of the point to quickly kill the animal. The Elders felt that this point could be used for spearing larger fish, for which activity barbs are required. If this is the case then maybe the hunter was packing this point with him while hunting the caribou and lost it during the hunt. I wonder if the row of barbs may have been a choice of individual artistic expression and identification.

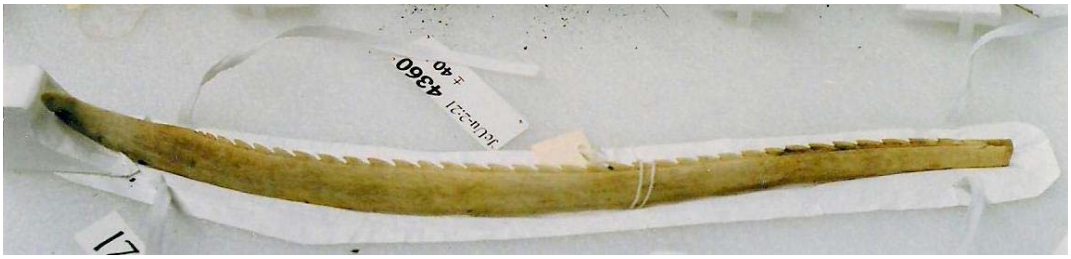


Figure # 300, JcUc-2:21, 4360 ± 40 BP. IPC.

While there are many theories about possible reasons for variations in points, from flight characteristic to target considerations, it is my feeling that each point was different for two main reasons; artistic individuality and a means of identification. This is not to say points were not designed for specific purposes, such as type of animal to be killed. In Figure # 301

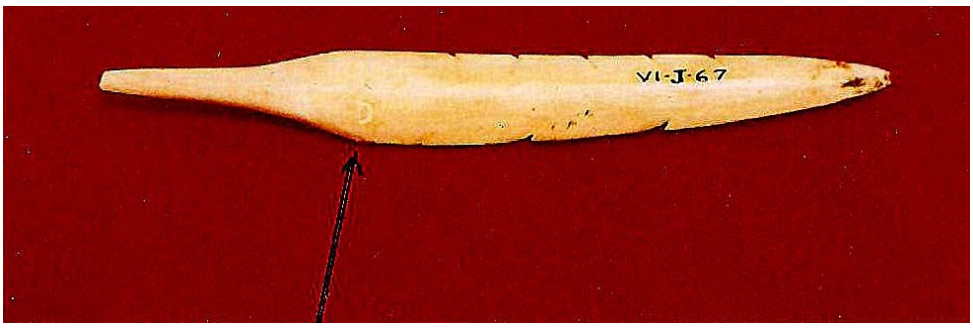
is a point from the CMC collection that has a unique pattern of a series of repeating "Xs" on both sides of the wide part of the point. It also has groupings of three lines that span half the width of the wide part of the point. It appears that these markings have no purpose but for identification and esthetics. There is also a series of small barbs incised along the pointed edge. This point was collected by D.D. Cairnes from the T&Ds store in the summer of 1911 and is reported to be Tutchone from White River. There was no other information available about this artifact.

Figure # 301, this arrow point has a unique series of 'x' incised on the side. Is this a form of identification? VI-Q-58. CMC.

A practice that began after the introduction of writing in the southern Yukon also leads me to believe these above mentioned markings were intended as personal identifiers. In *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* Catherine McClellan wrote:

> Indians and whites interacted during this period in many different ways. The archaeology shows that they did not just exchange artifacts; they also learned each others customs and ideas. For example, in a Bennett Lake site at Old Aishihik village there was a girl's drinking tube which is probably made of a swan bone. At first sight, the tube looks like it might come from the earlier Aishihik Culture, but scratched on its side is the name "Jenny." Indians living near where the drinking tube was found in 1963 thought that the name had been cut into it with a pen knife by the first person from their band who learned to read and write. Some of the elders remembered him well. In about 1892, as a young boy, he had gone to an Anglican mission school at Fort Selkirk. When he returned to Aishihik a few years later, his friends and relatives often asked him to carve their names on the things they owned. The Indians remember Jenny too. (McClellan 1987: 58)

The point illustrated in figure # 302 has the letter "D" engraved on the side. It is part of the collection at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. This arrow point was collected by D.D. Cairnes in the summer of 1911 at the T&Ds story in Whitehorse. It is reported to come from Teslin and therefore is listed as Inland Tlingit.



"D"

Figure # 302 "D" point. VI-J-67, CMC.

This initial "D" is a form of identification and is an example of the common practice of adding initials to possessions. This was the case for a short period at the end of the 19th century and the start of the 20th. Note other examples, such as the initials on an early 1900s knife from Aishihik in figure # 287 on page 283 and the drum in figure # 5 on page 30. Adding the initials or name to items is just one indication of a culture in transition.

As new materials became available they were used. See figure # 303 for an example of a point that utilizes both bone and iron. This arrow point was collected by D.D. Cairnes in the summer of 1911 from the T&Ds store in Whitehorse. It is reported to be Southern Tutchone from M'Clintock River.

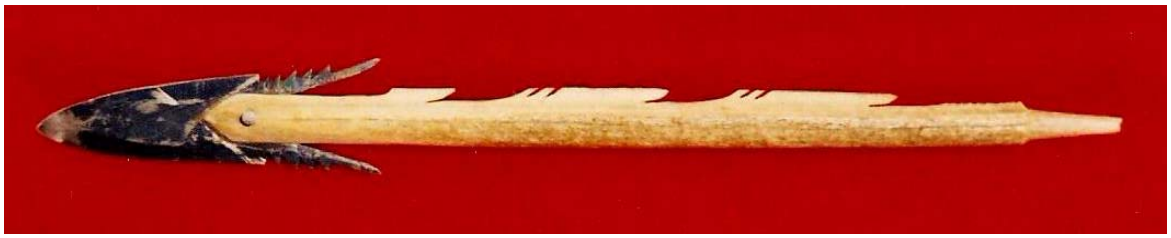


Figure # 303, A two piece point made from bone and iron showing a transition of material culture. VI-Q-28. CMC.

The next arrow point in figure # 304 is made totally of iron. It was also collected by D.D. Cairnes at the same time and place as the previous point. This one comes from Aishihik and is listed as Southern Tutchone. On the catalogue card it states: "'Arrow point' of steel, native work. Made with no other tools but axe head and file. Probably hammered out of old file."

Figure # 304, metal arrow point possibly made out of an old file. VI-Q-30, CMC.

There are a wide range of point styles. When I examined some of the bone and antler points up close I was amazed at the precise workmanship of the engraving and barb positioning. I admire the detail of the engraved blood lines that were done thousands of years ago. It looks like they were done with modern day precision tools. Mr. Greg Hare felt that gopher teeth were the tools used to incise the blood line. What is also amazing is the wide range of barb patterns that can be created for a hunting point.

Another hunting item with decoration on it is the bow. Bows that were made for displays to illustrate the old style bows at the Kluane museum of Natural History have a series of light and dark patterns ringing the bow. These patterns appear to have been added by controlled burning to brown the wood for the rings. They also may have added a kind of stain to achieve the rings. The ring pattern seems to have been done in the past in other parts of the Yukon. In *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* on page 68 is a drawing of the Loucheux (Gwich'in) man holding a bow. This drawing was done by Alexander Murray in the 1840s. We can see the same pattern in the bow that the man is holding. See figure # 305 for an example of the patterns and a pattern on an arrow that accompanies the bow from the Kluane Museum of Natural History.

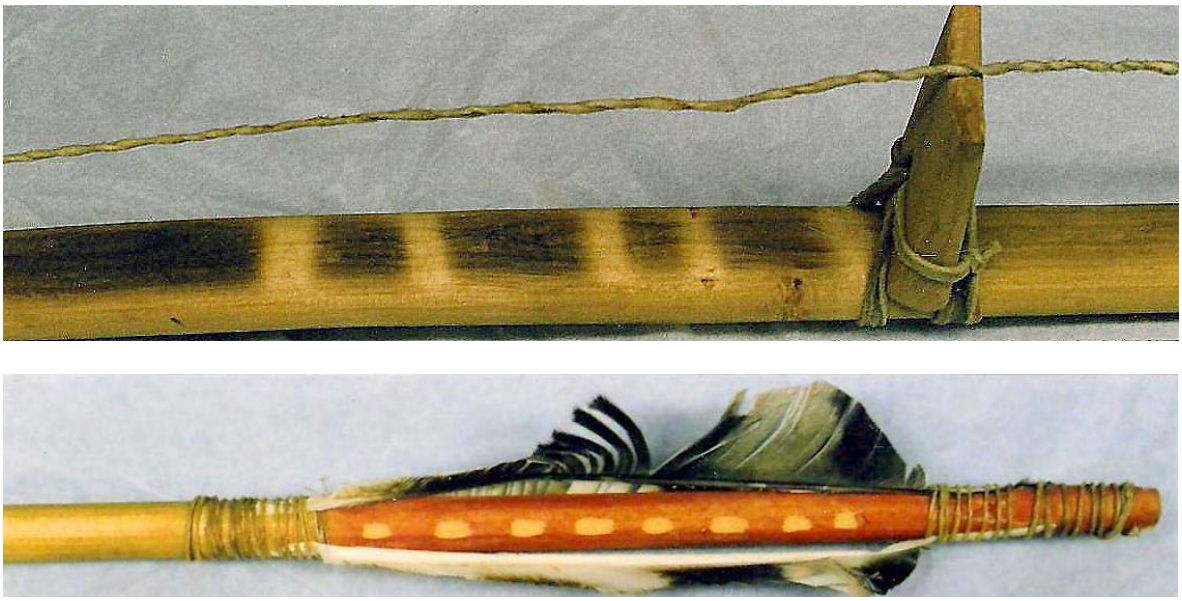


Figure # 305, ring patterns on the bow & pattern on arrow. 995.49, KMNH.

War clubs

While I have not come across any examples of war clubs from the south-central Yukon, I have seen many from the Tanaina, Ahtna and Gwich'in people. The war clubs may have been used in the south-central Yukon but no examples from this region have made it into museums. This is not such an unusual thing since I haven't seen examples of masks or rattles from the south-central Yukon either; I do know masks and rattles were indeed used in this area. In figure # 306 is a war club from the British Museum in London, England. It was from the Mackenzie River in the Northwest Territories and is listed as Athapaskan.

Figure # 306, Athapaskan war club from Mackenzie River, NWT. Am.2288, BM.

The handle end is broken off and the club is decorated with a very fine but common Athapaskan zigzag pattern. This club is typical of clubs from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Alaska regions. The next example is in the Ethnologisches Museum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, in Berlin, Germany. It was collected before 1830 by the London Missionary Society. The Church Missionary Society basically operated near a Hudson Bay post. This club would have come from somewhere around the Mackenzie River area, since the Hudson Bay Company did not go west of the Mackenzie River until the 1840s. Later the club was obtained by A. Speyer and sold to the museum in 1963. As A. Speyer's was a major collector he dealt with many artifacts. Recently some scholars have questioned the reliability of Speyer's identifications of the artifacts he sold. As a result the provenance and date of collection could be questioned.

Figure # 307, Athapaskan war club from Mackenzie River, NWT. IVA 9475, Ethnologisches Museum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

There is no need to show more clubs as they all have a similar shape, except their lengths vary somewhat. Some have hide around the handle, others not. They are all decorated with various detailed geometric patterns, repeating cone and zigzag motifs being the most common.

Hunt and warfare scenes

In this section I will discuss various hunting scenes that are either painted on drums and arrow quivers or engraved on bone charms.

The first image is an engraved bird on a bone from the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural, Anthropology Department. Printed on the bone is: "5610 Yukon R. W.H. Dall Knife". The museum lists this as a bone charm and Kutchin. I believe however that it belonged to a Knife Indian, as this is written on the bone: "Knife". The Knife Indians are the Northern Tutchone people. While Dall did not spend time in the Yukon Territory, some of his party travelled to Fort Selkirk from Fort Yukon and returned with items,

including a charred piece from the then burnt Fort Selkirk. Fort Selkirk was pillaged and burnt by Chilkat Tlingits in 1852, because it was interfering with their trade monopoly with the Northern Tutchone and surrounding people. Besides charred wood, Dall's party may have brought traded items as well. If they did not bring the bone charm with them from the Fort Selkirk area, then Dall may have collected it in Fort Yukon. There were Tutchone people in Fort Yukon when he was there. The Upper Pelly or Northern Tutchone people were known at the time by the Hudson Bay Company as the Knife Indians. The image on the bone is a man in a canoe about to spear a bird. On the other side of the bone charm is a scene of what appears to be two wolves chasing caribou. Both sides are done in a combination of stick figure and outlined styles. The man is in a canoe and the bird is quite large in relationship to the canoe. Is this a swan? Swans were hunted and spiritually important and therefore may have warranted its depiction. Swan parts were used in many rituals and shaman practices. Obviously this is an important charm and would have been a valued item for trade. See figure # 308 for the bone with the bird hunting scene and the other side of the bone with a scene of caribou and wolves.

Figure # 308. Bone charm, listed as Kutchin, possibly Northern Tutchone. NMNH 5610.

This wolves/caribou scene shows an event that happens in nature all the time. In case you wonder whether the wolves could be dogs instead: dogs were not used often for hunting but mainly for packing. Also, if this was a scene with dogs I would think that the hunters would have been included in the scene. Wolves hunt in packs and I have no doubt the picture is of wolves. I wonder if the artist/hunter created this and the other scenes to indicate that he wants to be a successful hunter, like the wolves. Maybe the artist is a member of the wolf clan and in a metaphorical way he is using the wolves to represent his clan at a successful hunt.

On another bone charm collected by Dall, at the same time as the above bone charm, is shown a hunting scene on one side and an event with a group of people on the other side. In figure # 309 is the hunting scene.

Figure # 309, Hunting scene on bone artifact. NMNH 5611.

The scene shows a lone hunter with a bow and arrow aiming at a herd of four caribou. Is the lone hunter the owner of this charm? Was there not enough room to place more hunters? These images are also done in both stick figure and outlined styles. The other side of the charm has a scene with a group of stick-figure people. See figure # 310. I am not sure what they are doing.

Figure # 310, Scene of group of people on bone artifact. NMNH 5611.

I think is shows either a dance or a battle scene. See figure # 311 for a closer look at the image.

Figure # 311. Scene of group of people on bone artifact. NMNH 5611.

Are they raising feather wands in the air as part of a dance to celebrate something or do they have knives raised in the air as part of a battle? Is the third man from the right killing the middle man? This is the only object representing a dance or battle scene that I have come across.

Hunting scenes on arrow quivers

Hunting scenes are often painted on arrow quivers. The Athapaskan arrow quiver is designed in the same basic pattern that covers the whole area from Northern British Columbia and into the interior of Alaska. One of the earliest examples of the Athapaskan arrow quiver is in the British Museum collection. This quiver was collected during Captain Cook's third exploration voyage of 1776-1780. See figure # 312 for a photograph of the image.

Figure # 312, Athapaskan arrow quiver. Am1978, Q.21 BM.

This quiver was collected by Captain Cook in May of 1778 when he explored Prince William Sound. Cook never positively identified the First Nations people he was trading with, but knew they were not like the people of Nootka Sound he recently left or the Eskimos. The area was the territory of the Chugach Eskimos, the present day Alutiiq, but there was a major pre-contact trading route with the Athapaskan Tanaina and Tlingits passing through the area. The two main items that the Native people wanted in trade were iron pieces of at least eight to ten inches long and sky-blue glass beads. I suspect the iron was to make daggers. Cook later sailed into Cook Inlet, the home of the Tanaina people, and also traded there. I believe this quiver to be Tanaina because of the style. Eskimo quivers are very different while the Athapaskan quivers will generally follow the same pattern. The exception to the typical Athapaskan pattern is the quiver that is shown in Alexander Murray's sketch in *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* on page 68. I have mentioned this earlier in this chapter. The Loucheux (Gwich'in) man is holding a bow and has a quiver that is not like any I have examined. I suspect that Murray got the details of the quiver wrong or that the detail was changed when the original sketch was transferred to engraving.

The quiver above has an opening on the head of the quiver like all Athapaskan quivers I examined which shows that they were worn on the left side of the body; the arrow would be pulled out of the quiver with the right hand while the bow was held by the left hand.

The opening is designed so that the shooter has easy access to the arrows. The arrows will not fall out of the quiver if it is tipped to a vertical upside down position. There is a strap that is attached to the top that allows it to be carried hands free. It is decorated with red ochre at both ends and porcupine embroidery around the opening, ends and center.

The porcupine embroidery is done in the typical Tanaina style. See figure # 313 for a detail of the embroidery that is added to the center part of the quiver. It is done in Tanaina colours of beige, sepia and brown. Compare these designs with the Tanaina porcupine embroidery that I presented in Chapter Three-Hide Clothing to Dance Shirts.

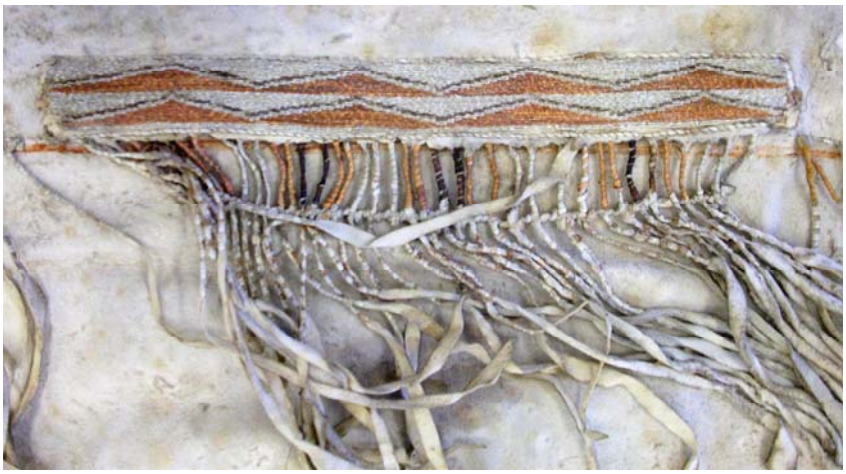


Figure # 313, Detail of Athapaskan arrow quiver. Am1978, Q.21 BM.

Because of the style I believe this to be the earliest Athapaskan quiver that was collected.

Following are painted quivers with animals and hunting scenes painted on them. Most are listed as Tanaina but some may be misidentified as Tanaina and come from other areas. This misidentification has probably the same reason as the tunics: they are often identified as Kutchin because of the pattern. The following four arrow quivers all have animals painted on them in red ochre and in the typical silhouette Athapaskan style. The first arrow quiver is from the Musee d'ethnographie in Geneva, Switzerland. The museum notes state that this quiver was made in the 1800s and was collected in Canada. It shows three sheep, two of which have arrows in their backs, as well as a beaver. The scene obviously makes reference to the hunt but the hunters themselves are not painted into the scene. See figure # 314.

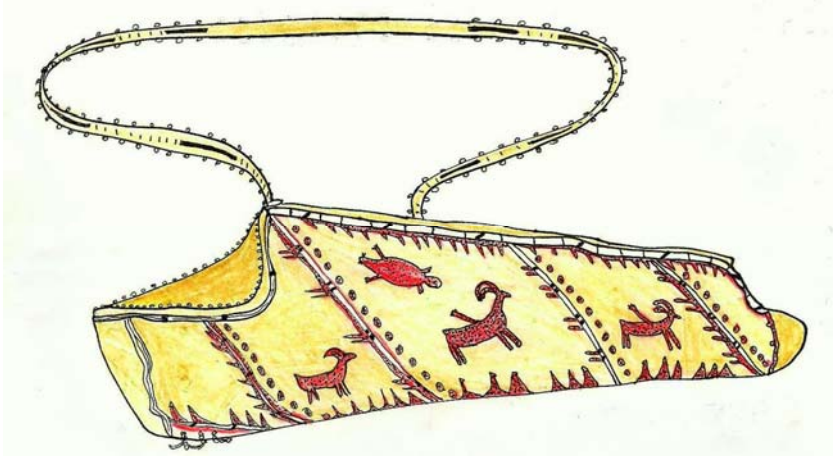


Figure # 314, Tanana arrow quiver with painted figures. Musee d'ethnographie

On the next three painted quivers from the collections of Peter the Great Museum in St. Petersburg, Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg and the Alaska State Museum in Juneau are animal chase hunting scenes. On the St. Petersburg quiver in figure # 315 are a dozen painted figures with the human hunters going after caribou while from the opposite direction there are most likely wolves going after two sheep. There are a total of four wolf-like animals on the quiver. The main caribou has an arrow in its back while the other large animal stands behind the hunters. While this may be a caribou without its antlers, it is heavier set, so may represent a moose.

Besides the caribou and sheep are two beavers. On an interesting note, one hunter has a bow to shoot the animals with while the other seems to have a different weapon. Is this a type of war club, a spear or a musket? There is a similar hunter on the quiver in figure # 317. I will examine the hunter in greater detail later.

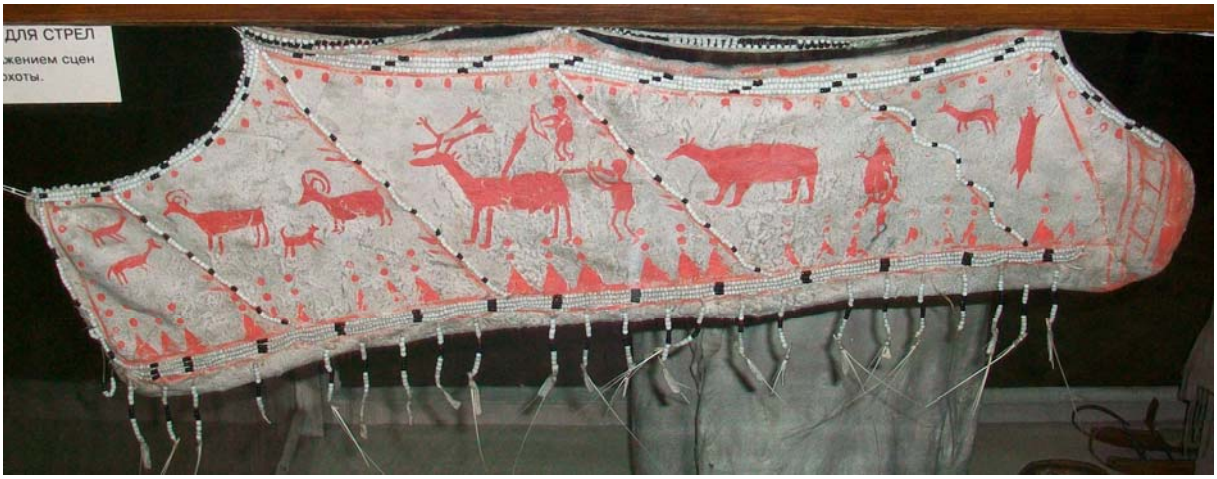


Figure # 315. Painted hunting scene on arrow quiver. Peter the Great Museum.

On the Hamburg quiver in figure # 316 is again a dozen figures with the wolves chasing the caribou, but there no hunters in the present in the scene. Again, there is at least one beaver represented.

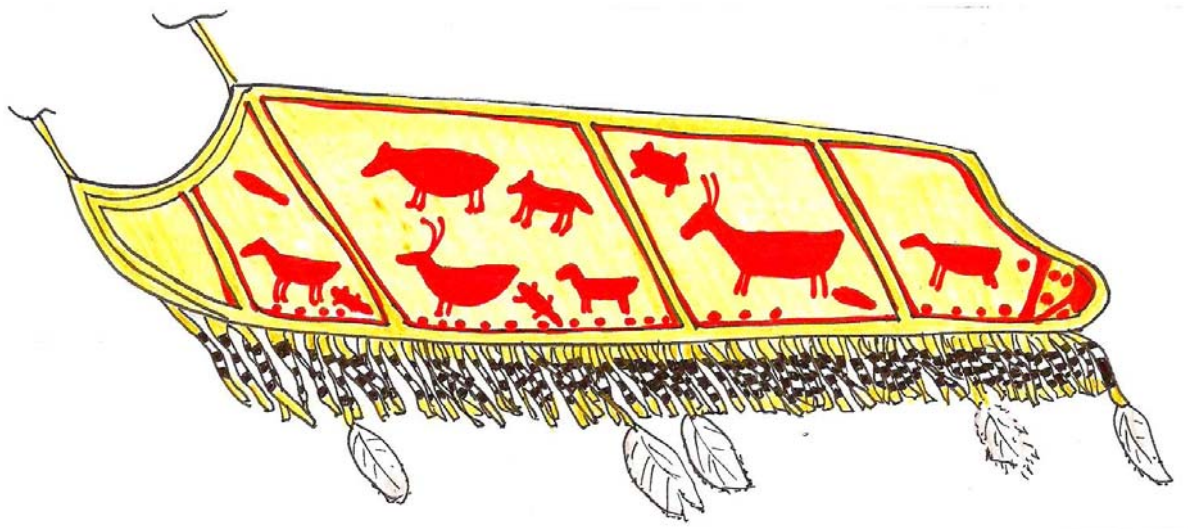


Figure # 316. Painted hunting scene on arrow quiver. Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg.

All three arrow quivers have the repeating dot motif and the Musee d'ethnographie as well as the Peter the Great Museum quivers both have the repeating cone motifs. Only the quiver in figure # 317 does not have the four diagonal lines going from the top to the bottom. This quiver is from the Alaska State Museum and on it is depicted a scene of larger and smaller animals. These animals, as in many of the other painted examples, are done in red ochre and are in the silhouette method. They appear to be caribou and since caribou were the main big game food source for many of the interior First Nations people, it would all make sense. Moose are fairly recent additions to the Yukon region, slowly moving into the area in the 1800s. The herds of caribou in the mountain ranges were so large that Elder Annie Ned, who was born in the 1880s, described a scene of "so many caribou, as if the whole mountain was moving". These giant herds were largely depleted by the end of World War Two. The quiver is identified as Tanaina type from Alaska.

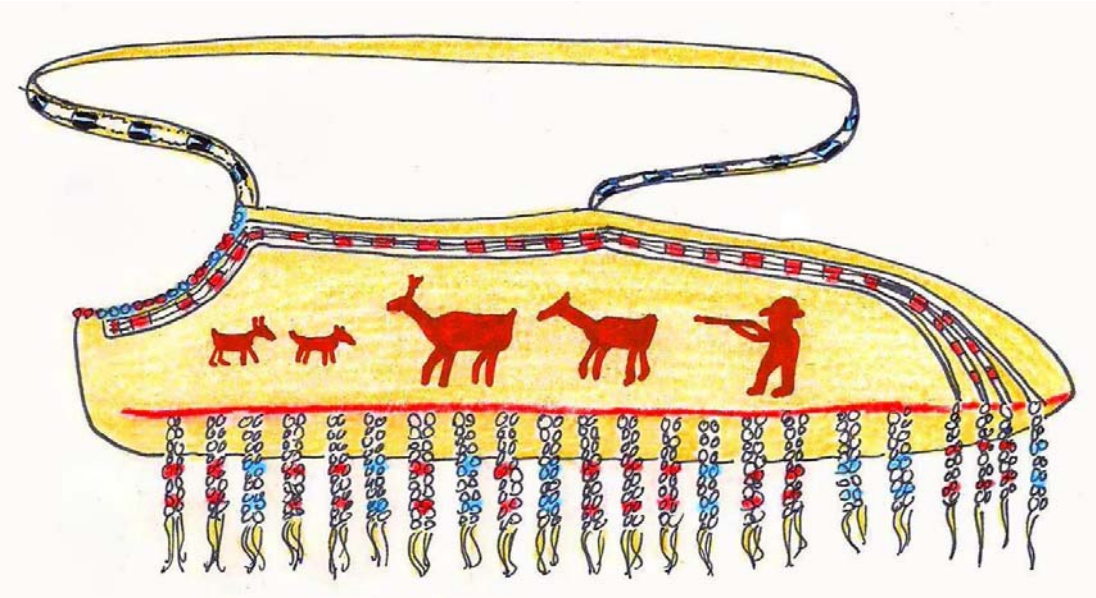


Figure # 317, Athapaskan quiver. ASM.

It appears as if the hunter is shooting the caribou with a rifle and is wearing a white man's hat. This does cause some questions. First, why would the artist put a rifle hunting scene on an arrow quiver, since it seems that the bow and arrows were intended to be used by that hunter? While there may be a time when the hunter used both a musket and bow and arrow it still would not explain why he would put the musket on his quiver. Maybe it was easier to paint the hunting scene of him using a rifle on the quiver than on the rifle stock. But then again, is the hunter instead holding a bow and arrow? The way the weapon is painted on the quiver may have to do with the way that Yukon First Nations shot arrows. They did not do it in the same way as Europeans or in the manner that is depicted by other First Nations from the south. Instead of holding the bow in a vertical position, Yukon First Nations held the bow almost horizontal. They shot their arrows from their bows while holding the weapon with an underhand grip. See an example in the following photograph in figure # 318.

Figure # 318, Ross River people shooting arrows. C1930s. Claude Tidd fonds # 7160, YA.

Yet the images of the hunters in figures # 309 and # 315 are holding their bows in a fashion that make it easily recognizable. Another hypothesis might be that the artist wants his arrow to fly as straight and deadly as a bullet, and therefore painted the gun on his arrow quiver. There were a few white men venturing into the interior in the late 1800s and this scene may be a reference to the First Nations person seeing the white man hunt with a rifle. After all, the quiver has beads as part of the design, so it was made anywhere between the 1840s and 1890s.

Another questionable image is the Whiteman's hat in figure # 317. See another image of a man that appears to be wearing a Whiteman's type of hat in figure # 319.

Figure # 319. Man and animals on Gwich'in Drum. Anchorage Museum. UvK drawing.

On the drum the top figure is a man that is wearing what appears to be white man's clothing. He is surrounded by animals, possibly moose, a wolf, a weasel, a caribou and, once again, a beaver. This drum is in the Anchorage Museum collection and was collected in 1948. It was made by the Upper Yukon Kutchin (Gwich'in). Since this drum is more recent in origin the man is wearing white man's clothing and hat.

But in the case of figure # 317, this might not be the case. There was a type of common root hat that was used by both Athapaskans and Tlingits about which little has been written. The hats might have been considered a copy of white man's hats. When painted in silhouette they would look like a white man's hat. See figure # 320 of an Athapaskan root hat that is in the Manitoba Museum's collection. The notes on this hat state that it was collected by Bishop Stringer from the Yukon. Bishop Stringer lived in various places across the north and was in and out of the Yukon around the turn of the 20th century. Starting in 1903 Stringer became more or less a permanent resident in the Yukon since he became Bishop in 1905. This hat would therefore be from around the turn of the 20th century. Another and much earlier hat is Tlingit and is in the Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde München.

Figure # 320. Yukon Athapaskan root hat. H4-33-7, MM.

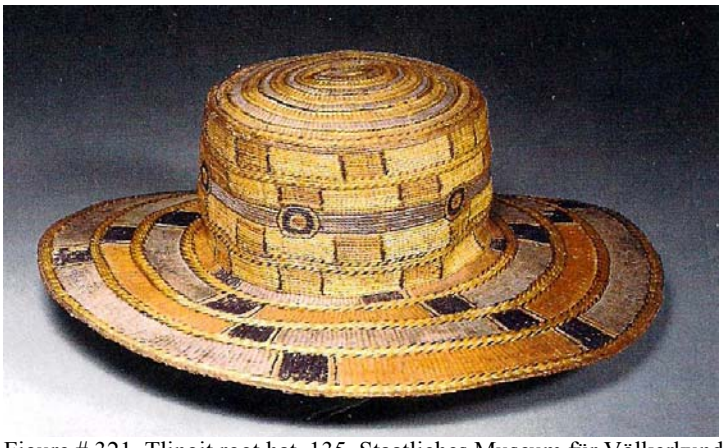


Figure # 321. Tlingit root hat. 135, Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde München.

The hat above was collected during Captain Cook's voyage of 1776 to 1780. As I mentioned earlier Capt. Cook was in the northwest coast area of Alaska in 1778. This places the hat style before the influence of white people and thus indigenous. Here we might have an answer to the hat in figure # 317.

A final quiver I will discuss can be seen in figure # 322. This quiver belongs to the Council of Yukon First Nations collection and the notes state that the animal designs on it are caribou and deer. These caribou are painted in red ochre and in "stick man" fashion, almost like the engravings on the speaker's staff that I discussed in Chapter Five-Figurative Art. While there is no hunting scene, there are animals painted on the quiver which are the targets of the arrows.

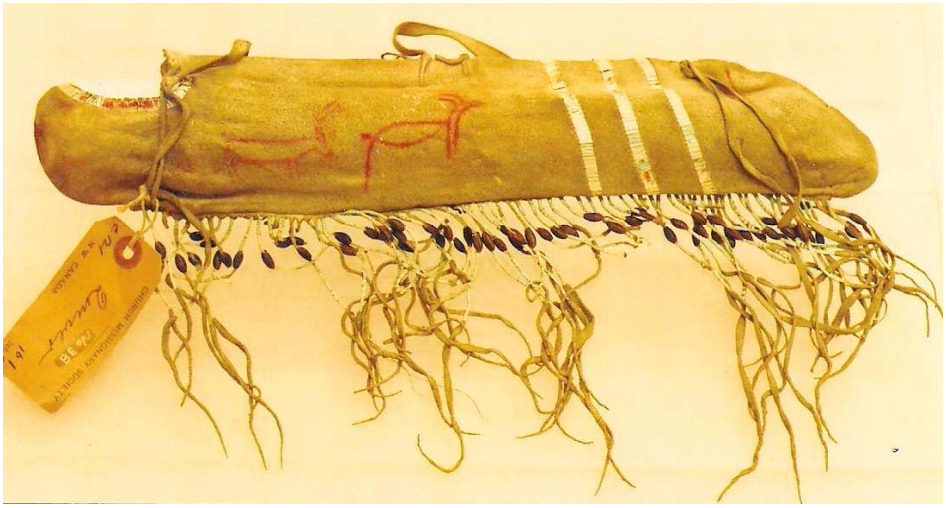


Figure # 322, painted quiver. CYFN.

This quiver was made either before trade beads arrived in the area in the 1840s, or it is a more recent object on which the maker decided not to use beads. The animal on the left is clearly a caribou but the animal on the right does not look like a deer as is stated in the note. Deer were only recently introduced into the Yukon. Also note that there is not an image of a beaver. I think that this quiver is from the Kluane Lake or Donjek River areas because of the Donjek berries that are located on the fringes at the bottom of the quiver. When I visited the Kluane Museum of Natural History in Burwash Landing there were a large amount of artifacts with the seeds of the Donjek berry. This berry comes from the Silverberry family and has been used by other Athapaskans. For example, the Gwich'in used them in their clothing, on fringes. I found that in the south-central Yukon, the most common use of these seeds was in the Kluane Lake area. Mrs. Annie Smith explained that the berry has to be boiled and the remaining seed was then used to put on fringes. Another reason why I think this quiver is from the Kluane Lake area is that the second painted animal is a dall sheep. The Kluane Lake area has a high concentration of Dall sheep on the St. Elias Mountains, besides Kluane Lake. The horns look like sheep's horns and the animal is not painted level, like the caribou, but on an angle, as if the animal was standing on the side of a mountain. Of course, since the Silverberries were wide spread, as was the practice of sheep hunting, the quiver could be from anywhere in the Silverberry range, which is central Alaska, southwestern Yukon and the Mackenzie basin areas. This quiver is smaller than a man's quiver and there has been discussion that this may have belonged to a child. I think that the work on it is too detailed to be a child's quiver unless an older relative made it for the child as a sign of affection or even a sign of wealth.

From the examples we can see that arrow quivers were often painted with hunting scenes or with prey animals. An animal predator, like the wolf, was most of the time included as well. Lastly, a beaver was often represented. Was this last animal depicted to represent the smartness of Beaverman and his ability to outsmart animals? Did the hunter want to be as smart as Beaverman in this case or was it due to the increased popularity of beaver pelts?

Additional comments

I have given a brief overview of the art related to hunting and warfare. There are some examples I have not mentioned. One such object is the scapula, on which images were placed. You can see two images in figures # 172 and # 173 both on page 191. But I have not seen any decorated scapulas to examine during my research. Neither have I seen any examples of hunter's amulets, of which I understand that they were often small carved animals. The next artifact was collected a long way from the Yukon but I think it is representational of a Yukon hunter's amulet. It has a long nose and appears to me a wolf's head. See figure # 323 for a photograph of the head that is also in the collection of the National Museum of Nature History. It is listed as Ingalik (Deg Hit'an) Tanana and was collected at Norton Sound, Alaska in 1880. The detailing of this artifact is very fine. The whiskers are shown as well as the nose and teeth. This size was typical of the carvings created by hunter-gatherer people. It is easily carried because of its small size. As for its purpose I agree with what Honigmann writes in *The Kaska Indians: An Ethnographic Reconstruction* on page 115 about hunting rites: "The wearing of animal figurines cut from bone insures success in hunting."

Figure # 323, Tanana Wolf head artifact. NMNH 43790.

Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death

Background to potlatches

Depending on the area there are different stories about the origins of the first potlatch. I will present one version told to me by Elder Irene Smith. She told me about a Fort Selkirk man who died and was buried. Maybe he was buried in a type of gravehouse that is shown in figure # 324. This gravehouse was recorded by Lt. Schwatka at Fort Selkirk during his 1883 Yukon River exploration. I will give a longer description of the gravehouse in the last section of this chapter. In the Irene Smith story the man came back to life because there was no death ceremony, or potlatch, at that time. He walked from the grave to where the people lived and everyone was amazed. He said that it was not right to just bury him, that there must be a potlatch. He explained to the people what had to be done. He described how the deceased person's clan was to host the potlatch. The deceased person's clan had to hire the opposite clan to be workers. The hosting clan would collect valuables and with that pay the workers later. Once he explained everything, the people made his potlatch and he returned to the grave. That was the first potlatch ever. Ever since then potlatches have been done that way.

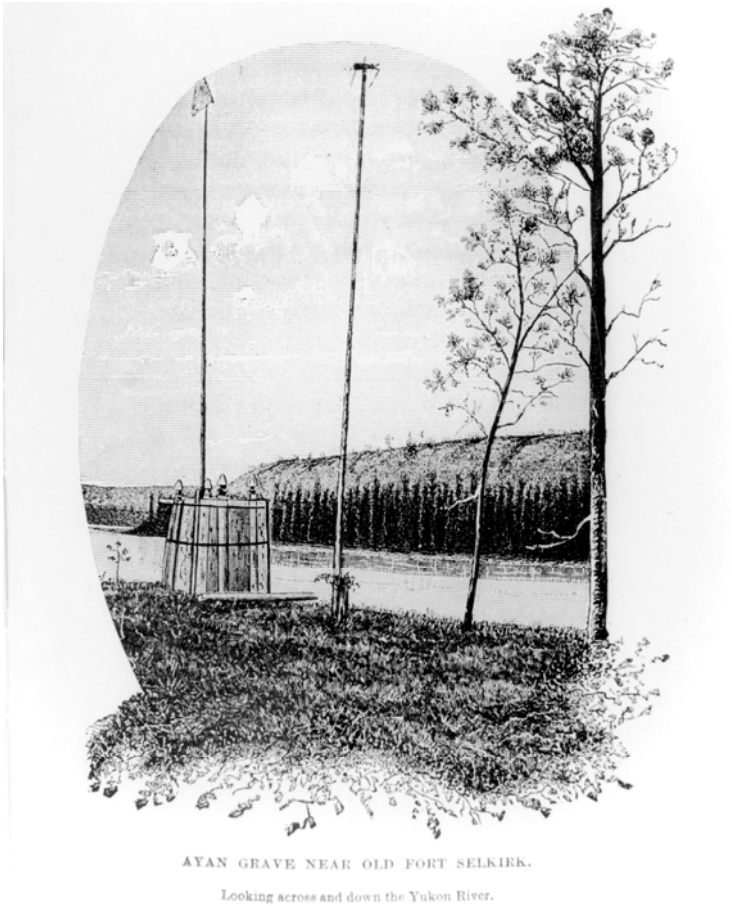


Figure # 324. Fort Selkirk gravehouse, 1883.

It is not unusual for First Nations people to believe that people die and come back to life. So the man who died in Fort Selkirk and then came back to life is not an unfamiliar concept. This death-like situation is thought of as a dream-state type of coma. When a

person, for no apparent reason, appears to have died, often in his sleep, people understand that she may be in fact on a spiritual journey and she must be left in the same spot and position. This death-like state would appear to white people as death. When white people saw someone in this state in the past they would force the burial of that person. This was very distressing to the family as they would be trying to explain that the person only appeared dead but would be coming back to life later. In the southern Yukon, a well known example of this phenomenon happened to my namesake Johnny Ned. While sleeping he entered a death-like state during which he travelled in the spiritual world and met people. One person Johnny Ned met was Jesus Christ. Jesus taught Johnny a song, told him that people should not work on Sundays, taught Johnny how to walk on water and gave him healing powers. Once Johnny emerged from the coma he began converting people to Christianity. He also healed people and did many good deeds. His efforts were quite successful to the point it caused concern with the Anglican Church as they though Johnny Ned was creating his own style of Christianity. There is a letter in Yukon Archives dated April 25th, 1917 in which the Anglican Church expressed its concern about Johnny Ned's unique version of Christianity. In the end the church decided that he was doing more good than harm and was left to be. Still today Elders hold Johnny in high regard and state that he was a good man. Johnny Ned is one of three people in the southern Yukon that I heard of experiencing the same phenomenon and for all three it happened around the same time. They awoke from a coma type state and started to convert First Nations people to Christianity. These types of events connecting with Christianity were quite widespread over the whole Cordillera region starting in the late 1800s until the early-mid 1900s.

In Chapter One-Cultural & Environmental Background, Art Periods and Comparative Art Styles I briefly discussed the clan system. In this chapter I will show examples of art that is used in the potlatch. The potlatch is a gathering of people in a celebration, to witness an event or for a funeral. In the case of a person who passed away, that person's clan hired the opposite clan to conduct all the work. This practice still continues today, one of the few cultural practices we have been able to maintain during our transition to this modern world. The hired work may include hunting for food, cooking & serving the food, grave digging, pall bearing, etc. There would then be a feast, the last meal with the deceased person. At the feast one meal is burnt. When the meal turns to smoke it has entered the Spirit World and becomes the meal for the deceased person. In modern times, after the feast the members of the deceased person's clan collect money from their clan. This is paid to all the workers. The collection bowl is turned upside down to show that all the money gathered has been paid out. Usually after the service and before the meal, the deceased is buried and a tent is placed over the grave since the person has started a journey into the Spirit World and will be travelling. In a year there is a headstone potlatch and that is when the tent is normally exchanged for a grave house, to show the person has settled into the spirit world. The person is buried with articles that she will need in the spirit world such as extra moccasins, blankets, tea pot and cups, sometimes even rifles.

In the past the person may have been cremated. While cremation was common Yukon First Nations people are not one hundred percent sure that cremation was the only means of disposing of the body. When a person was cremated the ashes were put in a container and placed in a tree, elevated platform or grave house. I am guessing that these early containers were made out of birch bark. Shamans were not cremated but buried. After trade contact, but before the missionaries' influence, the ashes were placed in Asian tea crates. These were obtained in trade and were originally used to store the imported tea. The boxes were fancy and at later times were placed in the grave houses. See figure # 325 for a couple of Chinese tea boxes on display at the Russian Bishop's House in Sitka, Alaska. This photograph shows

two tea cases together with examples of the blocks of tea in the open box. There are also boxes on display in the Yukon, for instance at the Klukshu Museum.

Figure # 325. Chinese Tea crates. Russian Bishop's House, Sitka National Historical Park.

It is generally believed that Yukon First Nations people cremated their dead until told by missionaries that the practice was wrong. We were advised to bury our deceased people instead. However, as seen in the image in figure # 324 of the grave house taken during Lt. Schwatka's 1883 expedition, we apparently had graveyards before contact with missionaries. According to Lt. Schwatka this was a burial grave house. Whether other gravehouses contained bodies or ashes is unknown to me.

In a story that was told to members of the 1948 Andover-Harvard Expedition by Moose Jackson, a Southern Tutchone man who had been hired as a guide and packer, he explained why people switched from cremating to burial. The story goes like this:

> Then Moose said that people don't burn their dead anymore: His grandfather remembered a man who, after having been dead for 4 yrs., returned to life for 4 yrs. & told of conditions in the afterworld: people there were running around only half-burned, with no cloths, with nothing to help them live on-so people should stop cremating. After 4 yrs. this man died a second time, this time for good. After that the people stopped burning their dead & began to bury them & construct the little grave houses with the lace-curtained windows. (All of the houses that I've looked at are just dressed up exteriors-the insides are barren & there is no floor, just the grave fill of the grave. I wonder what the relationship between these houses & cache burials is?) (Harp Jr. 2005: 23)

Elmer Harp Jr. had hired Moose Jackson along with a number of other Southern Tutchone men as guides and packers while Harp Jr. and his crew conducted an archaeological survey in the Southern Tutchone territory. Since Moose Jackson is talking about his grandfather's time, the transition to burial occurred in the late 1800s. That is before any missionaries were active in this part of the Yukon. Dalton had established his trading post at Dalton Post in the Southern Tutchone territory in 1895, the first white man to spend any time in the area in those years. His post would have had no influence on the First Nations people switching from cremation to burial.

McKennan gives 1870 as the time the transition from cremation to burial occurred in Upper Tanana territory:

> In former times the Indians burned their dead, but this practice has long since given way to burial. I found only one man who had ever witnessed a cremation, and he had seen it when but a small boy. As he recalled it, the body was dressed in elaborately decorated clothes including mittens and cap. The fire bag with its stone and tinder was hung from the belt, and the knife in its sheath was suspended from the neck, but no other weapons appear to be included. The corpse was then placed on the pyre amidst the wailing relatives. When nothing remained but a few charred bones, two forked sticks were set up bearing a crosspiece between them, from which a few eagle feathers and beads were suspended immediately over the ashes. (…) Cremation evidently ceased to be practiced by the upper Tanana about 1870, i.e. fifteen or more years before the arrival of the first White man in the region. (McKennan 1959: 146)

Based on the grave house that Schwatka recorded and McKennan's conversion date, the transition from cremation to burial occurred rapidly over the whole region before the arrival of the white people. This is an example of how quickly Yukon First Nations people can adopt new ideas and technology. I will discuss the conversion from cremation to burial and grave houses more fully at the end of this chapter.

Concerning the articles used in the potlatch itself, the important items of the early Yukon First Nations potlatch were the drum(s) to make music, the ganhook(s) or ceremonial dance stick(s) for the dance leader to lead the dance and the robes that the people wore along with such accessories as dance feather wands, fans and headdresses. Masks were also used during potlatches, as was the potlatch spoon. This last item was large and carved out of sheep horn. It was used to serve the food. The spoons have been discussed earlier and you can see examples of them throughout this thesis, in figures # 20, 25, 26, 32, 37, 155, 174, 201, 205 and 206.

Drums

While drums were used for a number of reasons, including stick gambling and by shamans, drums took on a central role in a potlatch. The drum provided the music for a variety of songs such as the good-bye song. This was sung when the deceased person was taken for the burial. Drums also provided the music for the various dances that were conducted at the potlatch. They would furthermore be used to highlight some part of the event such as bringing attention to a person who had contributed money during the collection or when a worker was asked to dance in order to get paid for her services.

In this first image, figure # 326, is a potlatch drum owned by Johnny Fraser, a Southern Tutchone chief from the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. I have discussed this drum already and you can see the earlier image in figure # 192 on page 203. The

photograph was taken during a dance performance in the late 1940s during the Winter Carnival.

Figure # 326. Johnny Fraser's Potlatch drum. 04.30. McBride Museum.

Once again there is a wide variety of period regalia on display. Johnny Fraser is wearing a hat as well as leggings with the common crisscross design. The hat has feather plumes coming out of the top. I will be showing these dance feather plumes later in this chapter. On the left side of the photo a lady is wearing a robe that is in the style of the gopher skin robe but the pelts look too big to be gopher skins. Maybe it is made from slightly larger animals such as marmots. The person standing to her right and behind is wearing a button-blanket robe. Interestingly, that person is wearing what appears to be an octopus dance apron as a headdress. Behind Johnny Fraser is a man wearing another button-blanket style robe with what appears to be a dance feather fan, much like the examples in figure # 392 on page 364. Note the woman on the far right is wearing a common blanket as a dance robe.

Another drum used by the Tahltan seems to have only been used for providing the rhythm for dancing. Below in figure # 327 is the drum that was collected by George Emmons in 1907 and is in the collection of the Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian. The drum is painted in red with a series of semi-circles around the edge. There is a variation of the four-direction motif in the center. The museum notes referring to George Emmons *The Tahltan Indians* state:

> The drum is so intimately associated with the dress, its use being for dance occasions only, that it may not be amiss to mention it here. It is made of tanned hide of mountain goat, stretched, when wet, over a circular wooden frame, and secured on the underside by cutting the skin into four strips, tapering from the circumference to the center, where they are knotted, and so serve as a handle. At present times tacks are often used around the lower edge of the frame to bring all parts taut. The head is often painted in totemic design. The drums are much smaller than those used by the Tlingit

and some are very small. The instrument may be beaten with the fist, but generally an improvised drumstick is employed. No regular drumstick was seen.

Figure # 327. Tahltan drum. 012877.000, NMAI.

Next, in the photograph in figure # 328 is a Crow painted Inland Tlingit potlatch drum. This was one of at least three drums that are shown in a series of potlatch photographs taken in Atlin in 1918. In this first photograph there is a painting of Crow, a fish and a face on the drum held by Atlin resident and Inland Tlingit Steve Williams. This may be related to the Crow and the giant fish or whale story as shown in figure # 275 on page 268. This is where Crow ends up catching and eating either a giant fish or a whale. Because there is no fish clan I am guessing that the fish and face are not related to clan images.

Figure # 328, Steve Williams holding drum with Crow, fish and human face. Courtesy Atlin Historical Society Museum and Brian Burke.

I am not sure why the face is included on the drum but if it is related to Crow it may be an image of him in human form. It could also be a portrait of the owner of the drum. The face is a simple design done in a common Inland Tlingit style. It appears to be a smiling face and has noticeable eyebrows. Similar styles of faces can be seen in figure # 179 on page 195 and # 182 on page 197. It also looks very much like the face in the tail of Crow on the large painted sheet behind Williams. The face is best seen in figure # 331. In the next photograph is a man, most likely Steve Williams again, who is holding two Crow drums in front of the large sheet with Crow on it. Since these two drums are almost alike I suspect they were painted by the same person. To reiterate, when images are this close in execution I tend to think that they were all created by one artist, given the interior tendency for individualism.

Figure # 329. Crow clan at potlatch, Atlin, BC. Circa 1918. Courtesy of Atlin Historical Society.

There is also a third drum held by a man in the back. This has the painting on the inside of the drum. The image shows Crow and two fish that seem to be joined at the tail. Also note the bird on Steve Williams dance shirt. Since these men are obviously members of the Crow clan, the bird on Steve Williams' dance shirt has to be an image of Crow. The image on the sheet is without a doubt a depiction of Crow since it has "Crow" written on the sheet twice. Crow's wings have been painted with a series of repeating dots and lines which make up the feathers of its wings. The body of Crow has the common Inland Tlingit trait of placing lines over the chest area of the body. In addition there is a series of simple floral designs in the lower part of the sheet at the sides of Crow.

By writing Crow on the sheet, the Atlin Inland Tlingit are identifying with the Crow clan and not the Raven clan from the coast. On the left of the photograph is a crouching man who is wearing a Chilkat robe that would have been traded into the Atlin area from the coast. In the next photograph is shown another Atlin Potlatch. I am not sure if this is the same potlatch as the two above photographs but it has the caption "Atlin Indians 18/8/18" showing, which refers to a potlatch on the 18th of August, 1918. The sheet with Crow painted on it has been photographed a number of times and is seen in *Atlin: The Last Utopia* (165) as well as *Their Own Yukon* (page 134). In the photograph in figure # 330 there is 12 men in various potlatch regalia. There are three drums: two of the previous Crow drums in figure # 329 and an additional drum that has a frog painted on it. On the large sheet behind the dancers is a painted frog. The image of the frog is often painted in this basic manner as you will see in the next section on ganhooks. However, this frog is a bit more complex than the ganhook frogs in figures # 340 & 341 on page 324. This frog is done in an outlined style with a solid center part much like the moose in figure # 194 on page 205. It also has a series of dots all over of its body. There is a face with eyes, eyebrows, nose and mouth at the top. It represents the Frog clan of the Crow moiety. In the Tlingit system there are two moieties with a series of clans under each moiety. While there may be more clans or houses, there are five main clans under the two moieties. Under the Wolf moiety are the Yanyedi (Wolf) and Dakhlawedi (Eagle and Killer Whale) clans and under the Crow moiety are the Deshitan (Beaver), Ishkitan (Frog) and Kukhhittan (Raven Children) clans. Because of this system you will often see the clan and moiety shown together as is the case in the photograph below with Crow and Frog clans.

Figure # 330, 1918 Atlin potlatch. Courtesy Atlin Historical Society Museum and Brian Burke.

I would like to bring your attention to the ganhooks or ceremonial dance sticks held by the man on the far left and by the person on the far right. While ganhooks or dance sticks have been used throughout the Yukon and Alaska I have only ever seen this style used in the Atlin Area. I will be showing better images of these ganhooks shortly. The man with the ganhook on the left is also wearing a Frog clan dance shirt. The person with the ganhook at the far right is wearing an elaborate smock. It is quite a unique garment. Note the fourth standing man from the right wearing a dance shirt that is reminiscent of the earlier hide tunics with decorated, pointed breastbands. The third man from the left is wearing a beaded cartridge belt. He has a feather plume as a headdress and is holding a canoe paddle. Canoe paddles were also used in potlatches by coastal Tlingits. There is the man with the paddle in his mouth. The Atlin Inland Tlingit have important stories involving canoeing on the Taku River so I suspect there is a connection between the man and paddle and those Taku River stories. See the detail of the photograph in figure # 331. The man with the paddle is wearing a cartridge belt and appears to have a feather plume coming out of his headdress. The paddle also appears to have art on it but the image is too blurry to verify. You can also see the image of Frog on the drum and the face above the tail feathers of Crow on the background painted sheet. It appears that the frog on the drum is in a silhouette style. There may be some inner working of the frog, like on the beaver, in figure # 209 on page 215.

Figure # 331, detail of story scene, Atlin potlatch 1918. Courtesy Atlin Historical Society.

Ganhooks

Ganhooks were used at ceremonies and potlatches by the central person of the dance in order to lead and direct the dance. The Han call this item a ganhook and they are identified as ceremonial paddles when collected from the Inland Tlingit. Mrs. Marge Jackson stated that these are called älitu, pronounced "aw-lee-too" in Southern Tutchone. They were used throughout the Yukon by at least the Inland Tlingit, Tagish, Southern & Northern Tutchone, and Han and Tanana people and may have been used by other groups like the Kaska (although I have not found examples). There are two main ceremonial dance paddle or dance stick patterns as well as one 'Atlin' dance stick pattern. The Inland Tlingit paddles have different imagery on them compared to the ganhooks and älitus. As in other examples of art on objects, the Inland Tlingit tended to use more figurative imagery on their ceremonial paddles while the Athapaskans used more geometric patterns. The Southern Tutchone used a combination of figurative and geometric imagery.
In *Han: People of the river*, the "ganhook" are described as follows:

> The "ganhook" or "ganho" (...) is a dance stick used by the lead dancer to direct the movement of other dancers. Ganhooks today are made from flat boards about six to seven feet long and five or six inches wide that have a handle at one end and hole in the board for the thumb. They are painted various colors and decorated with ribbons, yarn, and beads. (Mishler & Simeone 2004: 133)

The Ganhook looks like a long 1"x 6" board that is about six to eight feet long. The holding end is tapered. There may be other decorations attached at the wider end such as flags, ribbons or tassels. McClellan states this about "dance paddles":

> Garbed in sartorial splendor, with faces painted red and black, silver and abalone ornaments gleaming in ears and noses, the company of Tagish or Inland Tlingit dancers dipped and rose in time with the beribboned song paddles and the beat of skin drums or, in mourning dances, with the pounding of many dance sticks. (McClellan 2001: 323)

See Figure # 332 for a photograph of a potlatch at Eagle in 1907. This may have been a potlatch for Chief Charley who died in 1907. The person in the very front, kneeling, is Edward Wood. In the front row from left to right are Paul Chancy, Henry Harper, Charley Steve, Billy Silas, Ben Harper, David Taylor, David Roberts and Peter Thompson. In the back row are Kenneth, Chief Alex, Joseph, Jonathon Johnson, Canadian Joe, Esau Harper, Andrew Silas and Chief Isaac.

The ganhook is held by Andrew Silas. Three flags are attached and they appear to have Union Jacks, indicating this may be a Canadian Han ganhook. There is a wide range of artistic shirts, hats and accessories. Most of the shirts appear to be store bought and the appearance modified for ceremonial use. The exception is the shirt worn by Peter Thompson on the far right. It appears to be a home made dance style shirt. I cannot tell if it is store bought fabric or hide. The headdress he is wearing is of special note, quite unique and stylish, as are most of the headdresses in this photograph. On the other side is Paul Chancy with a headdress that represents a Canada goose. Standing on the very right side in the back row is Chief Isaac holding a drum. The photograph is not that clear, but it may be the same drum with the image of the moose on it that I have referred to earlier. Another very interesting item is the mask worn by Edward Wood in the very front. It appears to be a mask of a wolf. There are also feather fans held by a couple of the men.


Figure # 332, 1907 potlatch at Eagle, Alaska. YA.

In another photograph of a potlatch in Carcross in 1912 we can see two different style ganhooks, the paddle-like one on the left and board-like ganhook on the right. This potlatch has Tagish, Southern Tutchone, and Inland Tlingit people on the occasion of raising a tombstone to Dawson Charlie. See figure # 333. The more board style ganhook on the right shows a series of holes in the paddle with a Union Jack attached at the top end. It is in the same basic pattern as the Han ganhook above. This paddle is held by Billy Bone, an Inland Tlingit. The principal host of this potlatch was Skookum Jim, whose house is in the background. Besides holding the ceremonial paddle, Bone is also wearing a Chilkat shirt with a Wolf crest on the front. This shirt was ordered by Skookum Jim for this potlatch from the coast. The paddle on the left appears to have a series of tussles attached and is held by Johnny Fraser, a Southern Tutchone man. Johnny Fraser is wearing what appears to be a shirt that is made of store bought material or it is a store bought shirt modified for ceremonial use. The breastband is "V" shaped which is a common design for many of these shirts from the south-central Yukon.

Figure # 333, 1912 potlatch in Carcross. Anglican Church Diocese of Yukon fonds 89/41 #423, YA.

There is a wealth of artistic expression displayed in this photograph. The third person from the left is a Tutchone man, Big Salmon Jim. He is wearing the Tutchone style dance shirt and he is also holding a rattle. The man standing in the middle is Sam Smith. He is Tagish and is wearing a shirt with a crest design on it. The person standing to the right of Sam Smith is Tagish Jim and he is wearing a shirt with a vertical panel on it. The design appears to be a series of four-pedal flowers or maybe stylized crosses. Skookum Jim is also a Tagish man, third from the right. Skookum Jim is holding a small totem pole and is wearing two octopus bags, which are sometimes called dance aprons. The person standing on the far right is a Southern Tutchone man, Paddy Smith, my great grandfather and the first husband of Annie Ned. Paddy is wearing a fur skin robe and plays a drum.

This photo also has a series of feather fans and large plumes which I sometimes refer to as dusters. I will discuss these later in this chapter. Of special interest is the large mask held by Johnny Johns, a Tagish man? In the *Handbook of North American Indians* McClellan notes that this is a Tlingit mask.

In the book *Gold & Galena,* on page 15, is a photograph of a Northern Tutchone man holding a board style Ganhook during the Christmas celebrations in Mayo in 1935. See figure # 334.

Figure # 334, Christmas celebrations at the Old Village in 1935. *G.A. McIntyre Collection.* Mayo Historical Society.

In this photograph we can see the same style of ceremonial shirts that are either made from bought materials or bought and modified. There are also the fancy hats, the feather fans and painted faces. The ganhook has a series of ribbons and has one small hole close to the handle. There are simple geometric designs painted on the sides. Unfortunately there was a flood in 1936 and the people's costumes and ornaments used for traditional dancing were washed away and never replaced (*Gold & Galena*, page 12). On an added note of interest, Annie Smith stated that she remembers that Mr. Patsy Henderson had started a museum in Carcross a long time ago that burnt down. This must have meant a great loss of Tagish artifacts. She is not sure when it burnt down but thought it may have been before World War Two.

At the Canadian Museum of Civilization there are a number of ceremonial paddles and I examined three of them. Two appeared to be by the same maker while the other seemed to be older and made by another artist. See figure # 335 for a photograph of three of the ceremonial paddles at the CMC.

Figure # 335, Inland Tlingit ceremonial paddles. Left to right; VI-J-106, VI-J-105, VI-J-104, CMC.

It is impossible to tell whether there were any flags, tassels or other form of additional decoration added to these ceremonial paddles. As we have seen in the previous photographs, additional decoration was at times attached. Maybe it depends on the type of ceremony. From what I understand, images painted on these paddles tell stories and sometimes histories. On closer examination, we are certainly dealing with myth stories, such as when the man is spitting out the frog from his mouth in figure # 341, and maybe historical events. In all the ganhooks the range of colours are red and black with some blue and orange. I will examine the first paddle on the right, which appears to be the oldest of the three ceremonial paddles. This paddle in figure # 336, VI-J-104, was collected by D.D. Cairnes from the T&Ds store in Whitehorse in the summer of 1911. The information is presumably what Mr. Cairnes received from the T&Ds store when he purchased the paddle. The catalogue card states:

> Totem dance paddle of the Crow tribe, Teslin Lake. Used by the central figure in dances, also showing, according to Indians, the history or part history of the tribe.

Figure # 336, Inland Tlingit face design on ceremonial paddle. VI-J-104, CMC.

This paddle is carved from a single length of wood. There is a face carved on one side of the handle. The face and the rest of the images are painted in black and red paint. The carved face appears to also have bits of blue paint on it.

In figure # 337 is a series of images running the length of the paddle on both sides. Some of the images are: a bird, most likely Crow, a face with a cross hatched area above the face and a torso with its arms outstretched to its sides. I have included my drawing of the face for clarity.

Figure # 337. VI-J-104, CMC.

In the museum note it states: "Totem dance paddle of the Crow tribe" which I would say is more like a dance paddle from the Crow moiety of the Inland Tlingit people. In *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* it states:

> Moiety members never lived all together in one place, nor did they ever all act together as a single social unit. There were too many people in each moiety and they were too widespread. Moreover, neither the Wolf nor the Crow moiety has a specific history or mythology of its own like the clans and matrilineages. At a potlatch or feast, all the local and visiting Crows might squawk like real crows, or Wolves might howl like wolves, and moiety members liked to use Crow and Wolf designs on their clothing or other belongings, but these were not the same as house and clan crests. (McClellan 1987: 185)

Since this ganhook has Crow painted on it, it would belong to the Crow moiety. The image of Crow has the lines going through the breast in the typical Inland Tlingit fashion. There is a face just above the tail feathers. This face was done in profile as there is only one eye. Maybe it represents salmon which means influence from the coast where salmon heads are often placed in the available ovoid. The next image of the face is also done in typical Inland Tlingit style. It shows a smile and is similar to the face on the Crow drum in figure # 324 and the face just above the tail feathers in figure # 331 on page 315. You will notice the initials 'ES' at the bottom of the face. As stated earlier, it became popular at the end of the nineteenth century to put the owner's or the purchaser's initials on the object. I am therefore assuming that the maker put his initials on the ganhook once it was completed and at some time later sold it to the T&Ds store.

The outstretched hands have a face on them. Each hand has six fingers and claws. I am assuming that this image is not representing a human but an animal. Maybe this is an image of an animal who has taken human form. There is a series of "U" shaped motifs in the body and arms. Are these representing feathers? If so, this may be an image of Crow in human form but still covered with feathers and retaining the claws instead of hands.

The other two ceremonial paddles were collected by Lewis Clement from Teslin Lake on 19th December, 1912. Both these paddles appear to be made by the same person. The painting style is the same, as is the wood. Both appear to have old nail holes spaced along the length indicating that these were possibly planks of a structure, removed and converted into ceremonial paddles. The first paddle, VI-J-105, has a series of designs painted on both sides, with only minor differences between the two. See the following figures for details of images on one side of this ceremonial paddle. I have added a drawing of the main image for clarity as some of the paintings are faded. The design on the bottom of the paddle is a profile of a face, similar to the carved face on the previous ceremonial paddle. It has images on it that appear to represent face painting designs used by people during potlatches. There are lines coming down from the eyes similar to the invert "V" design used by women. This face also has a series of "X"s on its cheeks and what appears to be a mustache painted in blue with a red outline. Above the face is a 4-petal floral design (figure # 338).

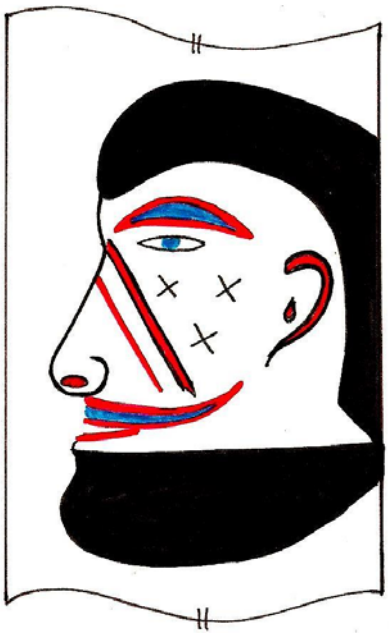
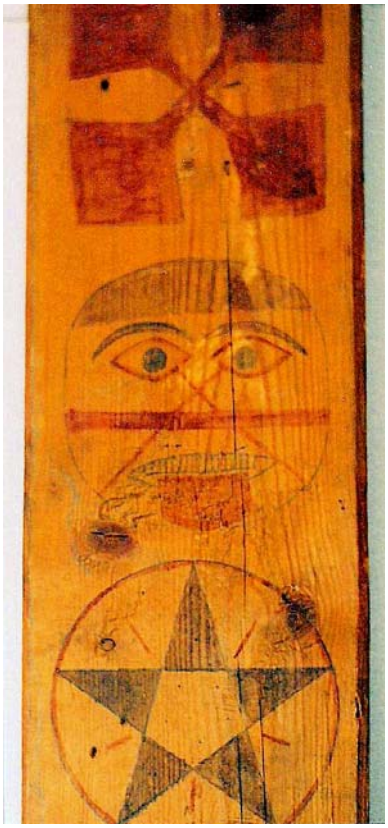


Figure # 338. VI-J-105, CMC.

In the image below is a design that appears to be like the four-direction symbol that is sometimes used. While not exact, there is a similar example of this symbol on the drum in figure # 31 on page 64. Below the four-direction symbol is a head with face-painted designs. The person also has the tongue sticking out. Below the face is a star symbol. Stars, moons and suns show up in various forms in Yukon First Nations art.



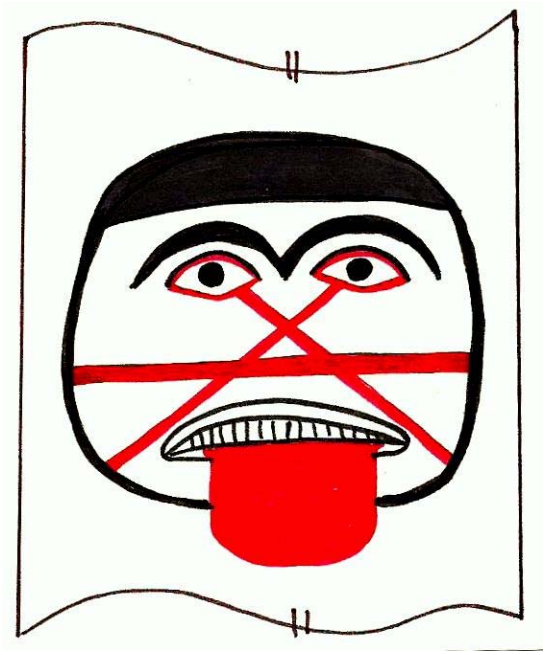


Figure # 339. VI-J-105, CMC.

While there are a number of faces on these ganhooks there are only a couple that have the identical face painting patterns on them. Is this a form of identification for individual people or are the patterns to represent something more communal, such as a clan? The tongue sticking out warrants some attention. Is this a facial expression that is part of a dance? Or is it related to a story or history of the clan? These are the only examples I have come across of faces with tongues sticking out in the Yukon. There are some examples in Northwest Coast Indian art but I could not find the reasoning behind this. Maybe the Inland Tlingit's images are related to the Inland Tlingit practice of their shamans cutting their tongues as part of their rituals, either to become shamans or to gain more shamanic power. This in turn is related to the Coastal Tlingits shaman's ritual of cutting out the tongue of the otter. The otter gives himself to the person who from that point forward is a shaman. The Northern Tutchone felt that it was very dangerous to tamper with the power of the tongue and felt that tongue cutting could lead to insanity. The relationship between shamans and tongues is further described in Carl Jung's *Symbols of Transformation* in paragraph 144 on page 94. Jung is describing the ancient Persian Mithras' cult ritual that involves clicking the tongue:

> The whistling and clicking with the tongue are archaic devices for attracting the theriomorphic deity. (Jung 1990: 94)

Theriomorphic is the worshipping of beings that are represented in combined human and animal forms. This sounds very similar to Yukon shamanistic practices.
The next image is of a frog which would most likely represent the Frog Clan. The Inland Tlingit depicted the frogs rather simply without lines on their chest areas and sometimes have the series of dots covering their bodies. The frog is rendered with an orange paint. Frogs in the Yukon are of green-grayish colour. Is the choice of a brighter colour used to make the frog stand out? Or is the colour arbitrarily chosen?

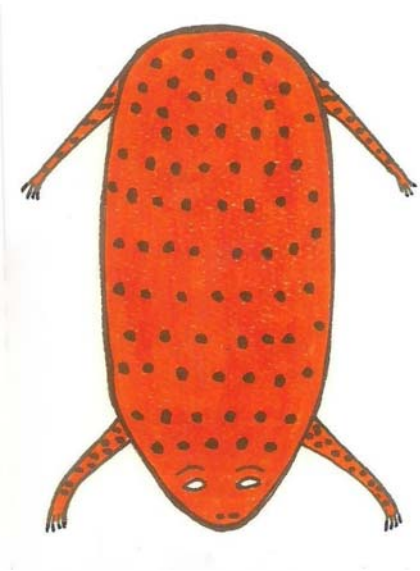


Figure # 340. VI-J-105, CMC.

The next figure, #341, also shows a frog-like animal that is coming halfway out of the person's mouth, possibly being spit out as a sign of disgust. Above the man is a killer whale. See figure # 342 for my drawing of the Killer Whale image.

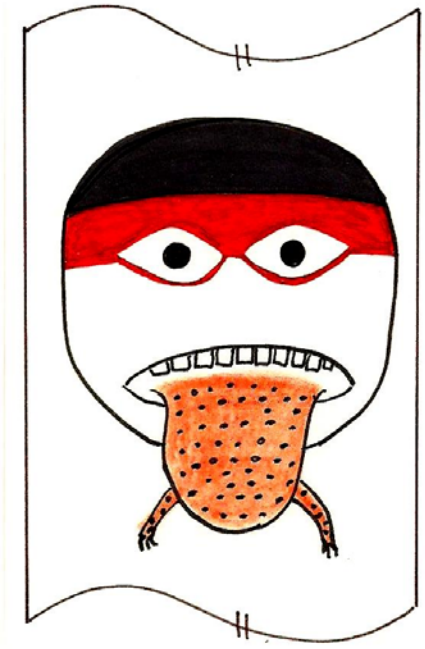


Figure # 341. VI-J-105, CMC.

The frog coming out of the man's mouth may be related to a story from the Sheldon Museum in Haines, Alaska. In the publication entitled *a personal look at The Sheldon Museum & Cultural Center,* on page 21, is a description of a Ridicule Pole. This pole can hold a person or entire group of people in ridicule. The publication describes one such small pole:

> This one is telling the world that the recipient is a person who didn't pay his debts. The Beaver, at the top, is spitting out the figure of a man, who happened to belong to the Frog House, represented by the bottom figure. He borrowed food for a trip and never paid it back. The Raven is ordinarily a happy bird, but appears sad on this pole. Both the Beaver and the Frog houses belong on the Raven side, so Raven also feels the disgrace. (Hakkinen 1983: 21)

Maybe a member of the Frog House is spit out on the ceremonial dance stick above. There is the earlier frog design on that same ganhook in figure # 340 which adds a bit of confusion as to the Frog Clan and the representation of the disgrace. Maybe the ganhook is like a story board and is showing a sequence of events: the member of the Frog Clan came for assistance and later was disgraced.

Below is an image of killer whale painted in ganhook VI-J-105 in blue and red colours. The water coming out of the blowhole and the circle on the dorsal fin indicate that this is a killer whale. The upper half of the whale is in a solid colour while there are the common lines running over the chest of the whale, along with the repeating dot motif. This whale is clearly an Inland Tlingit image. While the outlined image and solid colour across the top indicate an Athapaskan style, the body lines make this an Inland Tlingit image. This whale is done in a different style than the fish in the next image in figure # 343.

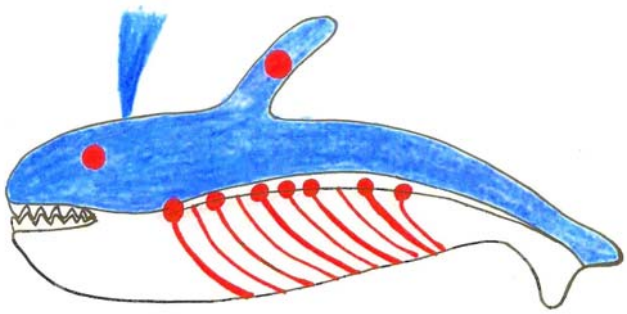


Figure # 342. VI-J-105, CMC.

In figure # 343 is Crow carrying a salmon. I am showing both sides of the ganhook. Crow is painted in black in Athapaskan silhouette style and is carrying what I am assuming to be a salmon because of the red paint on the upper half of the body. Salmon have the red colour as a result of having to journey the long distances upstream to spawn, unlike the silver coloured salmon caught in the ocean. There is a series of lines on the salmon's body to represent the scales. I am guessing that this image is of Crow carrying a salmon and it is related to the Crow and giant fish story. The images are placed at the end of the ganhook. I do not know how important the position on a ganhook is, but if it is a consideration, then this bird is likely in a dominant location. Below the salmon is a face with his tongue sticking out. It has the face-painted designs on it and is completed in the same manner as the previous two faces shown above.

Figure # 343. VI-J-105, CMC.

Below is my photograph of Tlingit Norma Shorty with her face painted in the same pattern as the painted faces in figure # 343. This is to give an idea of how the face painting would have looked a real person.

Figure # 344. Face painted design based on ganhook design in figure # 339. UvK collection.

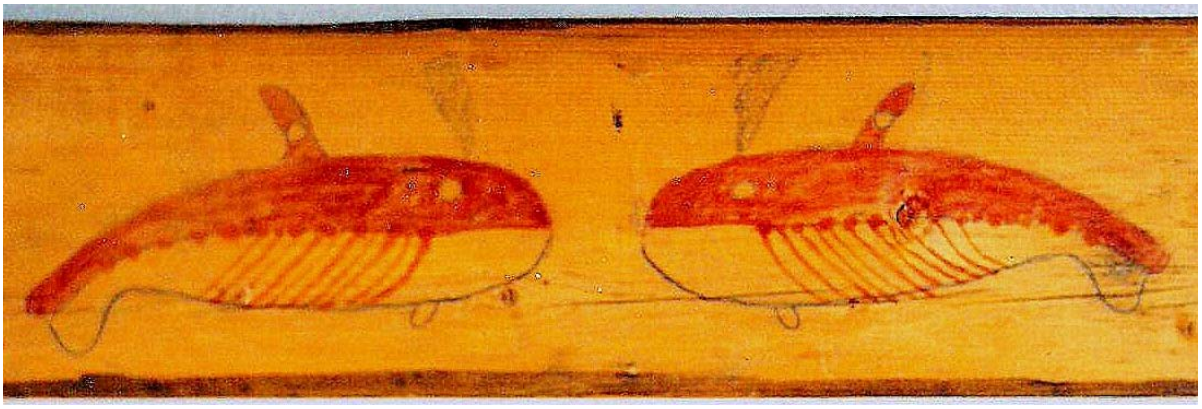
The second ceremonial paddle, VI-J-106, is narrower than the previous one and slightly shorter. This second paddle has many motifs similar to those on the previous paddle which would indicate that it was made by the same person. The designs mirror each other except for minor variations. The list of designs starting from the bottom to the top are as follows: the face of a man that appears to have a mustache; a star in a circle (both in figure # 345); two facing killer whales with Crow in between and a black ovoid also between the two whales (figure # 346); a face that is flanked by two 4-petal floral designs; the hole through the plank is followed by another face flanked by the 4-petal floral designs. Next are two killer whales facing each other (figure # 347) followed by a full figure of a very mischievous looking person in figure # 348.

In all three paddles the primary colors used were black and red. A couple of other colors were used: orange for the frogs and some blue in the profile face of the two previous paddles as well as one killer whale. The profile face on VI-J-105 seems to be a copy of the profile face on VI-J-104; they have similar location and looks. There are differences in detail but this face may represent a person from the Teslin area that was an important figure from Inland Tlingit history or myth.

Figure # 345. VI-J-106, CMC.

Figure # 346. VI-J-106, CMC.

In figure # 346 above is a scene with two killer whales facing each other and a black dot between them. I believe that the black dot is a blemish in the wood as you can see these black spots in other areas of the ganhook, as in figure # 348. Crow is painted in black in silhouette with a red dot for an eye and is between the two killer whales. The killer whales are depicted in the same style as the killer whale in figure # 343, but this time in red. Is this simply a crest-like image or does this represent a story?



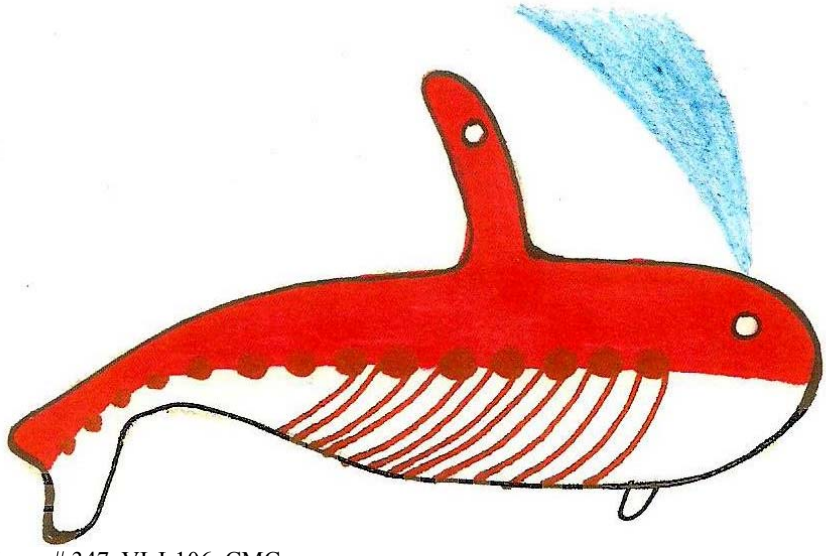
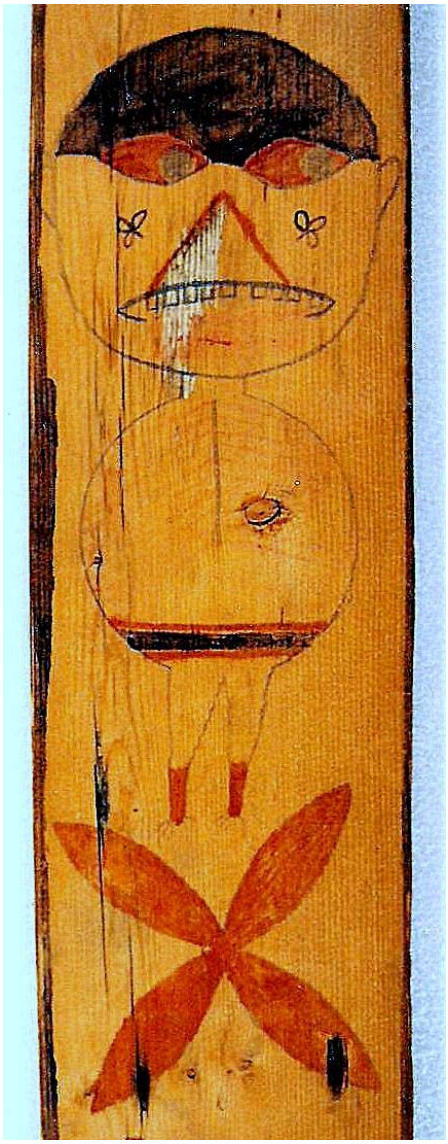


Figure # 347. VI-J-106, CMC.

In the above image are two killer whales facing each other. In this example there is no Crow between the two. I have included my drawing of one of the killer whales for clarity. These killer whales are done in the typical Inland Tlingit painting style. It is an Inland Tlingit trait to place two images facing, or away from, each other.

Based on my understanding of the Inland Tlingit moieties, clans and sibs, I believe that these killer whales represent the Daklaweidi, or, Killer Whale clan of the Inland Tlingit and are illustrating their inland links with the coastal Tlingits. The Killer Whale clan is part of the Wolf moiety of the interior or the Eagle moiety of the coast. I have written about the Inland and Tagish Killer Whale clans on pages 221-223. On that same ganhook are images of Crow and Frog, Crow being the other moiety and Frog being a clan under the Crow moiety. The images on the ganhook may be illustrating a story or history of the clans and sibs or may simply represent all the people in that band. The band of people would be made up of a number of sibs representing clans from the two moieties.



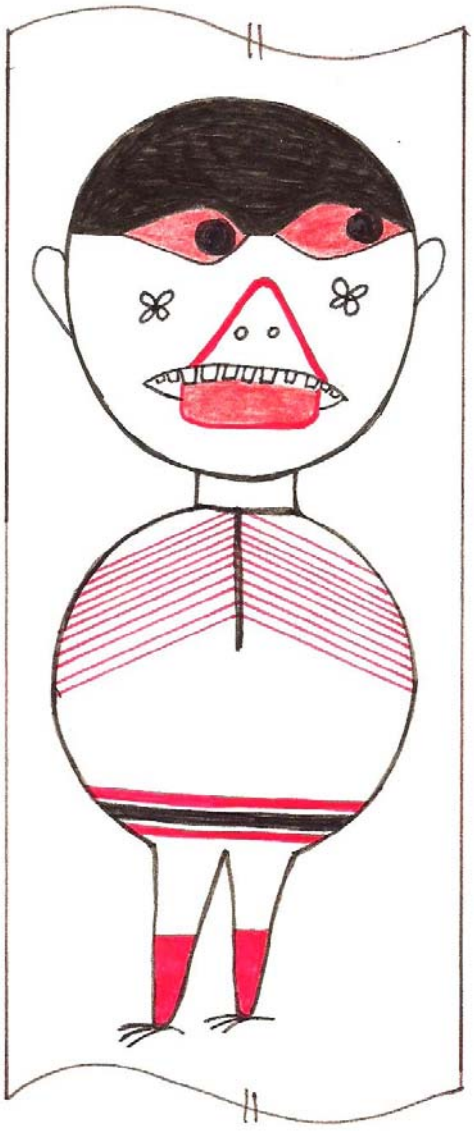


Figure # 348. VI-J-106, CMC.

In the above figure is a very mischievous looking human figure without arms. He has his face painted with designs and has the common Inland Tlingit lines that span across the chest. I am not sure if these are 'X-ray' lines that are common in many other indigenous art styles or a more unique Inland Tlingit design element. This figure also has the tongue sticking out and has bird-like claw feet. Is this an image related to the theriomorphic idea? Is this a person in the process of transforming into an animal or visa versa?

All the faces on these three Teslin ceremonial paddles appear to have been painted in the same manner as people would paint their faces during times of berry picking, potlatches and other ceremonies. The Elders stated that the face-painting designs were personal.

The other type of Inland Tlingit dance stick was used by the Atlin Inland Tlingits. I have not seen this style of ganhook elsewhere and it seems to be unique to the Atlin area. See figures # 101 on page 128 and # 330 on page 314 for earlier examples of the Atlin dance sticks. When compared with the dance stick in figure # 349, on display at the Atlin Historical Society's Museum, the dance stick in figure # 101 is decorated but has flatter ends and appears to be more geometric in design. The dance sticks in figure # 330 appear to be painted solid black or a dark colour like red and have puffs of fur attached at the ends and close to the handles. The example below in figure # 349 is fashioned in the same pattern; it has a holding place in the middle of the stick and slightly tapering at the ends. However, the dance stick in figure # 349 is different from the examples shown in the two photographs indicated above. This dance stick is painted to represent Crow. It is done very much in the same style as the Crow image in figure # 330. There is a head just above the tail feathers, there are stick-like legs and claws and there is a series of lines on the body. The end of the dance stick represents the head of Crow.

Figure # 349. Atlin Inland Tlingit dance sticks. AHS.

Note the rattle in the top image. I will discuss this rattle later in this chapter. Most Athapaskans used little figurative art in their work, but Athapaskans closer to the Tlingits did create a number of works that incorporated figurative art. While the ganhook below is of a more recent time, commissioned by Solomon Charlie possibly sometime in the 1970s, it may be representative of the early southernmost Southern Tutchone ganhooks. Charlie commissioned Southern Tutchone artist Ron Chambers to create this ganhook for him. It was

used for a while in First Nations dances and is now in the possession of Solomon's son Bob Charlie. Solomon Charlie is also my first cousin twice removed. See figure # 350 of my recent photograph of this ganhook.

Figure # 350, Solomon Charlie's ganhook. Bob Charlie collection,

This ganhook has a wolf at one end and a crow at the other representing the two Tutchone moieties. There are some hints of the ovoid in the design which may be an influence of the coastal Tlingit art style. Red and black are the only colours used and there is a series of ribbons and other decorative objects attached to the ganhook.
This is a typical example of Athapaskans using geometric decoration on their ganhooks. See below for a Tanacross geometric decorated ganhook that is in the Field Museum in Chicago. I apologize for the image but the ganhook was sealed in plastic and could not be removed for the photograph.

Figure # 351. Tanacross Ganhook. 270124. Field Museum.

There is a repeating semi-circle in bright orange and blue colours going all the way up the sides of the ganhook. There is also a series of orange dot-within-a-circle motifs that are in the same position where holes are drilled through. There is a series of what appear to be commercial made bright yellow feathers attached along the length of the ganhook. In all appearances this is a fairly recent ganhook. In the same museum is a Tanacross drum that is decorated in the same manner. See figure # 352 below. It appears to me that this drum was made by the same person around the same time as the ganhook, as the colours are the same. Unique about this drum is the decorated holding handle which the artist has integrated into the overall drum design. This is the only example of such drum handle that I have seen.

Figure # 352. Tanacross drum and drum stick. 1981.3509.270106. Field Museum.

Still another ganhook in the above fashion is on display at the Anchorage Museum, as seen in figure # 353. It is also a Tanacross ganhook and is very close in design to the Field Museum example. Instead of having a series of semi-circles going down the sides of the ganhook it has a series of zigzags. Instead of a series of dot-within-a-circle motifs in the middle it has a series of diamond shapes. The colours are the same. The didactic panel states: "Dance Staff. Julius Paul, Tanacross 1981. Wood, paint, chicken feathers. The Nalchene clan of the Tanana Athapaskans purchased the right to use such staffs from the Han tribe. 81.85." It would appear to me that Julius Paul made both ganhooks and possibly the drum.


Figure # 353. Tanacross Ganhook. Anchorage Museum.

The reference "The Nalchene clan of the Tanana Athapaskans purchased the right to use such staffs from the Han tribe" may be related to the time Chief Isaac of the Moosehide Han took the Han ganhooks and other cultural treasures to Alaska for protection against the Canadian Government. The book *Han: People of the River* by Craig Mishler and William E. Simeone, describes the situation quite well:

> The *Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in,* or Klondike band of Han, came under intense pressure to change during the Klondike gold rush. One change desired by the Canadian government was abolition of the potlatch. In 1884, the government amended the Indian Act, making participation in the potlatch a misdemeanor. Although created to eradicate the potlatch along the Northwest Coast, the law also took effect in the

> Yukon Territory. The government, as Catharine McClellan wrote, "thought it unchristian and they feared that a potlatch host would lose everything and become a public charge."
> Responding to this prohibition, Chief Isaac of Moosehide "took" many of the Han songs and dances associated with the potlatch and left them with descendants of relatives and friends who now live in the villages of Northway, Tetlin, Tanacross, and Dot Lake. According to stories told by residents of Tanacross, Dot Lake, Tetlin, and Dawson, Chief Isaac gave the songs, dances, and a dance stick called a "ganhook" or "ganho" to the people of the upper Tanana region. These songs have been retained in the people's memories until today, and some of them are still actively performed.
> According to Benjamin McCloud of Dawson, who learned the story from Titus David of Tetlin, Chief Isaac attended a memorial potlatch for Chief David of Tetlin about 1917. At that potlatch Chief Isaac taught the Tetlin people Han songs and gave them the Han drums and a ganhook. The "ganhook" of "ganho" is a dance stick used by the lead dancer to direct the movement of the other dancers. Ganhooks today are made from flat boards about six or seven feet long and five to six inches wide that have a handle at one end and hole in the board for the thumb. They are painted in various colors and decorated with ribbons, yarn, and beads.
> Tanacross elders say that the Han from Dawson were noted dancers who taught their dances to relatives from Mansfield Village. Tanacross tradition also says that in 1912 Chief Isaac of Dawson left the ganhook at the old village of Lake Mansfield. (Mishler & Simeone 2004: 133)

Chief Isaac is a Yukon First Nations cultural hero who resisted the government's efforts to destroy the Han, and all Canadian First Nations culture. Chief Isaac took action and the result is that today the Han from Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation are now working at relearning and reviving from the Alaskan Athapaskans those cultural treasures that Chief Isaac gave a century ago.

The following is an actual paddle. See figure # 354. I include this to show the patterns on paddles since they were used during potlatches as seen in figure #331 on page 315. This is a Han paddle on display at the Dawson City Museum and is also decorated with geometric chevrons and a diamond. It is painted in red, black and white. In photographs I saw of paddles, it appeared that some may have had designs on them. The poor quality of the photographs did not allow me to be sure. Like many other items I researched, most paddles were not decorated. However, when I inquired with the Elders about this, they all stated that designs were added to paddles in order to make them fancy.

Figure # 354, paddle on display at the DCM. UvK drawing.

In the Yukon ganhooks fell into disuse in the 1930s with the odd exception here and there. There may be a bit of a revival of ganhook use for some local dance groups. The painted patterns on the faces on the ganhook were common up until about 60 years ago. It seems that people stopped using the face painted designs in the 1940s. For face painting also there seems to be a slight revival in local dance groups.

Rattles

Rattles had limited use by Yukon First Nations when compared to the drum. There were locally made rattles as well just as some rattles that were traded in from the coastal Tlingits. The first rattle in figure # 355 was selected as a Yukon First Nation artifact by the Council of Yukon First Nations committee. The rattle was originally collected by the Church Missionary Society and they were active all across the north. The Church Missionary Society was part of the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia and they collected Aboriginal artifacts from the 1850s until about 1910. In 1998 the Council of Yukon First Nations repatriated a number of these artifacts which were thought to have been collected from the Yukon. There was no documentation of where and when these 'Yukon' artifacts were collected, but a Council of Yukon First Nations committee selected this rattle along with a number of other artifacts that now make up the Council of Yukon First Nations collection. It may be questioned whether this is indeed a Yukon artifact, as I have not come across other Yukon rattles made in this style. I have seen rattles made in this style from areas outside the Yukon, see figure # 356 and # 357.

Figure # 355. Athapaskan Rattle, CYFN Collection.

The rattle below is in the collection of the National Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC. It is listed as rattle drumstick from the Slavey people in Fort Nelson, British Columbia. The rattle was collected by Harmon Hendricks and arrived in the museum collection in 1919. The rattle has a red bird painted on it and has a number of fringes coming out of the handle. There are flat sheets of metal rolled into cones and added to the end of the fringes.

Figure # 356. Athapaskan Slavey rattle, 092486.000 NMAI.

The other rattle in this style that I have come across is also a Slavey rattle, see figure # 357.It is a rattle collected from Slave Athapaskans at Fort Rae on Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories. The photograph is from *Athapaskans: Strangers of the North* on page 157. The caption states: "Rattles were generally used by shamans in ritual practices, or were simply a children's toy." That is a wide range, from Shaman's rattle to a toy, but as you have read earlier in Chapter Six-Ritual, Shaman Art & Story Related Art, the dolls also ranged from shaman's tools to toys. The three rattles are essentially made in the same pattern: a stick that forms both the handle and then curves around to form the round part of the rattle on which the hide is put to hold the berry seeds or pebbles inside. This same rattle design can be found further east among the Cree in Ontario and Quebec, but I have not seen a rattle with this type of pattern west or north of the Slave people. The fact that there are similar patterns in many of the objects made by Athapaskans does not prove or disprove that this rattle is of Yukon origin. Yet my doubts about the Yukon origin of this rattle increases when I look at the design of a Yukon made rattle. In figure # 358 is a rattle pattern shown to me by Elder Johnny Smith, as an example of the rattles used at least in the southern Yukon.

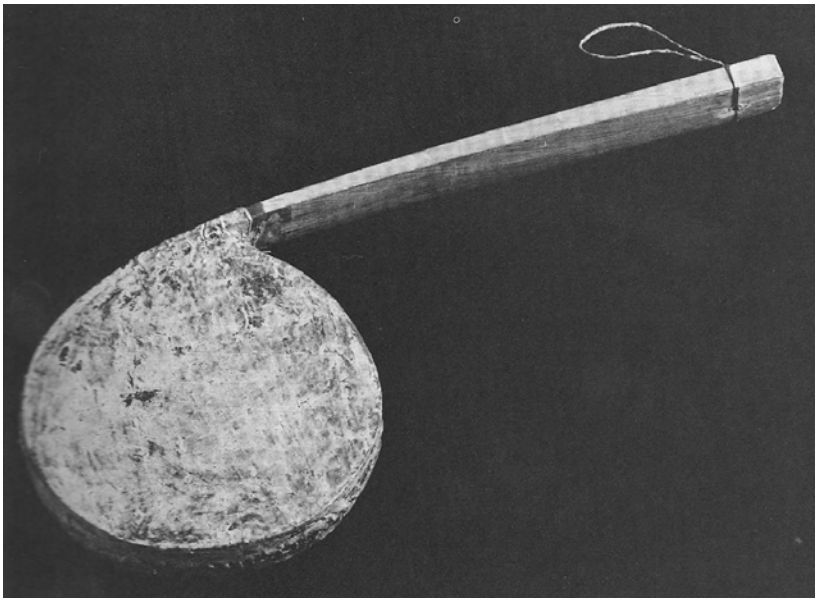


Figure # 357. Athapaskan Slave Indian Rattle, VI-N-46, CMC.

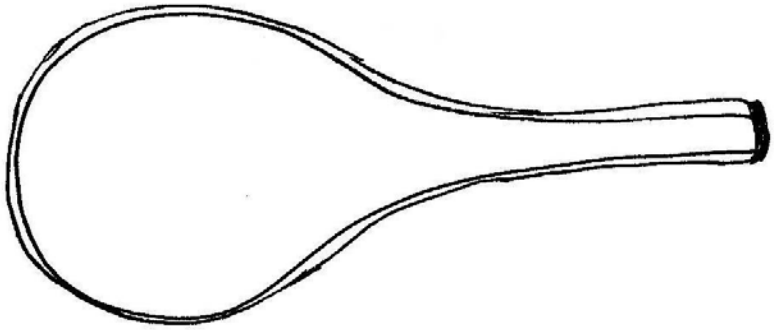


Figure # 358. Pattern of Yukon First Nation Rattle, UvK drawing.

The rattle in figure # 358 is basically made of two carved wood halves with seeds inside and then joined together. I have not seen a rattle of this type in any museums but the next rattle in figure # 359, is on display at the Atlin Historical Society Museum in Atlin,

British Columbia. The rattle is a cross between the coastal style rattles and the interior "silhouette" imagery. While not technically from the Yukon the rattle is Inland Tlingit and therefore I consider this rattle to be an example of the interior art style.

Figure # 359. Atlin Inland Tlingit rattle. AHS.

This rattle represents Crow and is painted in gloss black with red highlights on the eyes, mouth and nostrils. It appears to be carved in three sections: the head, body and tail, and then joined. This rattle is another example of the figurative images in Inland Tlingit art while the Athapaskan generally did not use this form of imagery.

These are all the Yukon rattles that I have come across, minus the rattles that were traded into the Yukon from the coast.

Gopher skin robes to button blankets

Another important item used in potlatches and other ceremonies is the robe. The first robes were made from gophers and other furs and later button blanket robes were introduced when the trade in fabrics started in the late 1800s. In the *Gathering of traditions Potlatch 2003* booklet the society writes the following history of the button blanket:

> Button Blankets go way back, to a time even before buttons and blankets. Originally, Yukon First Nations people made robes from furs, skins or cedar bark, and adorned them with amulets or abalone and dentalium shells. Later, buttons and duffel replaced the older materials-but the imagery and importance remain the same.

It does not say where the information was obtained from, but it raises concerns, since cedar does not grow in the Yukon and I have not come across any information about cedar bark or cedar bark robes being traded inland. Quite the contrary, interior clothing was in high demand on the coast and thus was traded out of the interior. The text also states that blankets were decorated with amulets, abalone and dentalium shells. I have not heard or seen amulets, abalone or dentalium shells used on blankets but I have heard of moose-hoof moose skin blankets. In *Life Lived Like a Story* on page 303 Annie Ned tells the story of Nùlatà marrying his three daughters off on the shores of Kusawa Lake. Nùlatà was her husband's grandfather and my third great-grandfather. Annie Ned says:

> Next one, *Aakegántth'at*. From that place, *Nakhu,* that narrow place at Lake Arkell, He threw moose skin in there too-big moose skin. That's the one, moose-hoof blanket, and she goes on top of that skin when she's going to be married. (Cruikshank 1990: 303)

Gopher skin robes were used in at least the south-central Yukon and northern British Columbia before the introduction of button blankets. The gopher skin or other animal fur robes were often seen in potlatches, such as in the photograph of the 1912 Carcross potlatch in figure # 331 on page 315 and in the dance in figure # 326 on page 311. I remember seeing gopher skin robes as a child, but today they are very rare. McClellan states:

> Almost every older woman in Southern Yukon owns a "gopher-skin" robe. And almost everybody has snared or trapped, then eaten with relish hundreds of gophers. (McClellan 2001: 158)

The robes take between 80 and 100 gopher skins to make. McClellan states:

> Gopher-skin robes have always been popular. These usually have seven or eight skins across and 12 or 14 skins down, before the skins are sewn together the legs are removed and they are trimmed to rectangles. Sometimes the tails are left hanging for a decorative touch, but more often they are cut off. The older robes were often lined with tanned caribou hide, and later times cloth or thin blanket served as a backing, both to cover the eye holes and to prevent the robe from slipping. (McClellan 2001: 304)

There is a lot of evidence of the use of gopher, groundhog and marten skin robes. There were also beaver, fox, lynx, swan breasts and netted rabbit skin robes. In Mary Easterson's *Potlatch: The Southern Tutchone Way,* there is a photograph of her late grandma Sophie Watt. She appears to be wearing a groundhog robe. Groundhog, because the rectangles appear to be too big for gophers and there were ample of groundhogs in the mountains of the Kluane area where Sophie Watt lived. See figure # 360 of the photograph.

Figure # 360. Sophie Watt wearing a skin robe. CMC collection, #785, YA.

In Figure # 361 we can see another example of a gopher skin robe. This photo's caption states: "Elderly Stick Indian woman". As mentioned before some groups of people were identified by other names that are now generally accepted. The Southern Tutchone along with the Tagish and Inland Tlingit were sometimes referred to as the 'Stick Indians" while the Northern Tutchone were generally called 'Nehaunee', 'Crow People', 'Caribou', 'Mountain' and finally 'Wood Indians". The Han were also 'Wood Indians'. Judy Thompson also noted that other Athapaskan peoples were at times identified as 'Stick' Indians such as the Tahltan people. There seemed to be no single accepted name for the people around the Fort Selkirk area. As we can see in this photograph, the elderly woman is wearing a gopher skin robe tied around her neck. Note that the robe appears to have a lining that the fur has been sewn onto. She is also wearing a nose ring and has a walking stick. She is wearing undecorated older style hide boots.

Figure # 361. Elderly 'Stick' Indian woman. Swanson fonds, 8598, YA.

This style of hide boots was common in the past but now seems to be almost unknown. There are a number of these boots in various museum collections. See figure # 362 for an image of one such set of boots. While most of these styles of boots were collected from the Gwich'in, the following example is from the Upper Taku River. They are listed as being from the Taku tribe of the Athapascan and were collected by George Emmons in 1922. I am not exactly sure who the Upper Taku River Athapascans were but suspect they may be either the Inland Tlingit, a southern group of Tagish or northern group of Tahltan. The Inland Tlingits are not Athapaskan but the Upper Taku River is in their territory. By this time Emmons had been collecting from the Tahltan people for years so he would have known them and would have identified the boots as Tahltan. This leaves the Tagish but that seems too far south. Maybe they traveled regularly to the region. This pair of boots has the

porcupine embroidery pattern in the typical Southern Yukon style. The only difference between these boots and the Gwich'in boots is the embroidery style.

Figure # 362. Old Style hide boots. 115408.000, NMAI.

In her section on Potlatch Stories, Easterson includes stories from Elders Mrs. Rachel Dawson and Mrs. Kitty Smith about the First Potlatch. In these stories, gopher skins, button blankets and marten skin robes play significant roles. One story is about a Crow girl in Haines, Alaska. She finds a little worm and begins taking care of it, even breast feeding the worm. The worm grows and becomes dangerous and smells, and is a concern to her five brothers. The boys plan to distract the girl, and find out that their grandmother needs help with a gopher-skin robe. The girl attends to the grandmother and the boys kill the worm. The girl finds out, cries, and directs how to bury the worm, since technically the boys are the worm's uncle. She tells about the role for button blankets, how to wrap the worm up and how to bury it. From this story we learn how people were instructed at potlatches. In this story, the gopher skin robe is mentioned as well as the button blanket. This is one of the reasons that button blankets were often associated with potlatches. In a casual conversation with Ms. Frances Joe, she stated that people made their button blankets in preparation for their death. The button blanket would go with them to the spirit world and would be burned or buried with the body. This goes along with the story mentioned earlier about the girl that raised the worm. This, and the Fort Selkirk practice of tearing the button blankets in half at potlatches, may have resulted in the rarity of examples.

Annie Ned talked about all the different blankets used at her mother's grave potlatch sometime between 1890 and 1900 at Hutshi. While these may not be button blankets, they were used in this potlatch:

> I let go and I looked at people dancing. Blue! Blue blankets. Coast Indians keep a big cache [of blankets], all blue! (...) Those Klukshu people wear red blankets--those

> Klukshu people. Humpback fish, little red fish come to that Klukshu: that's the dance they're making. That's the story I told you one time. People are dancing just like little fish!
> People come from Carcross, from Dalton Post, from Aishihik. I *know* [remember] but I don't know [understand] what is going on. People all have different dances: Klukwan dance, Hutshi dance, Ayan dance. (Cruikshank 1990: 313)

In Cruikshank's notes Annie Ned states that the Klukwan dance was a Tlingit-style dance, the Hutshi dance was her own Southern Tutchone people's dance and the Ayan were 'people downriver', that is the Northern Tutchone people's dance.

While not seen regularly, there still are a couple of gopher skin robes around today. Diane Strand is a member of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and owns an old gopher skin robe. See figure # 363 for a picture of her robe being modeled by her daughter Shauna. Diane Strand bought this robe from an antique shop in Haines, Alaska and felt the owner had no idea of the importance of the robe.

Figure # 363. Gopher Skin Robe modeled by Shauna Strand.

There are still a few robes around but they are rarely brought out. There are some gopher skin robes in various museum collections in the Yukon and throughout North America. The Klukshu Museum and the Kluane Museum of Natural History in the Yukon both have gopher skin robes in their collections. See figure # 364 for a fancier gopher skin robe that is in the Hood Museum of Art in Hanover, New Hampshire. This robe was collected by Charles Sheldon sometime between 1904 and 1909 during his travels and hunting in the Yukon and Alaska.

Figure # 364. Gopher Skin Robe. 51.32.12863 Hood Museum of Art.

This is a very nice example of a fancy gopher skin robe. The creator of this robe spent extra time to add fringes on both the inside and outside. This would have been very noticeable when the person was dancing. The creator also lined the skin joints with red ochre. Unfortunately I have not heard of anybody making a gopher skin robe anymore. First Nations artisans rarely use gopher skin these days as it is hard work. One is also not allowed to hunt along the highways anymore. Button blankets are easier to make and have now become the choice robe to wear.

The Athapaskan button blankets were common in the past, but rarely in the form that we see in this area today. If any, the designs in the past were limited to simple geometric patterns as you will see later in this section. The Coastal Tlingits, and some Inland Tlingits, have clan and crest designs on their button blankets. In the button blanket display at the Sheldon Museum in Haines, Alaska, it says:

> Button Blankets-Káa Yooka,óot' Xóow were originally made and worn by Tlingit people of lesser rank. Tlingit woman began making button blankets in the 1700's when early traders brought commercially made wool blankets to the Southeast.
> Blankets were made from navy blue wool blankets acquired from the Hudson Bay Company traders. A stylized animal design depicting a crest figure such as an Eagle, Raven, or Wolf was usually appliquéd to the centre of the blanket in a contrasting color of flannel and outlined with buttons or beads. Wide bands of red flannel wool bordered three sides of the blanket and trade buttons were sewn around the edges.

It was sometime after the creation of the Tlingit button blankets that they started production in the south-central Yukon. I wondered if earlier Athapaskan gopher skin robes were the first button blankets decorated with abalone buttons traded from the coast. When trade fabric arrived, gopher skins were mounted on fabric. This left a trim area of fabric around the edge where abalone buttons could be sewn on. If the "shelled trims" were done there are no references or examples of this. The Athapaskan, as well as the Inland Tlingit button blankets, may also have been originated from Hudson Bay and other trade blankets. When the Yukon Field Force was making its journey to Fort Selkirk in 1899, Edward Lester wrote in his diary about the Indians at Camp Victoria. Camp Victoria is located at the south end of Teslin Lake and I am not sure if this was an Inland Tlingit or Tahltan village:

> There is also a large colony of Indians here, whose camp we duly inspected. (...) They present, however, a very picturesque appearance with their bright coloured blankets striped with all the colours of the rainbow. (Greenhous 1987: 133)

Is he referring to Hudson Bay or other trade blankets? Interesting is the striped button-blanket that Chief Isaac is wearing. See the excellent photograph of him at Moosehide in figure # 365. It was taken by Claude Tidd in Moosehide just downstream from Dawson City.

Figure # 365. Chief Isaac at Moosehide. Claude Tidd fonds, 7283, YA.

We cannot see the back of the blanket, but in the front the row of buttons is clear. There are other photographs of Chief Isaac and his button blanket, but again no examples of the back. Due to lack of design, the back of the button blanket likely never warranted a photograph.

Inland Tlingit may have also made the Athapaskan style button blankets. In *Their Own Yukon* on pages 96 there is a photograph of a burial in Atlin, BC with a coffin resting on a button blanket. I cannot tell if there is a design on the blanket or not. I presume that, if present, the design should have been partially visual from under the coffin but there is nothing showing. The design looks a bit like the button blanket in figure # 367.

The Inland Tlingit did at least sometimes have button blankets with designs on the back. In *My Old People Say* in plate XIIIb, there is a photograph of a button decorated dance blanket in the background. This photograph was taken in 1954. In *Their Own Yukon* on pages 110 and 134 there are photographs of people from Teslin and Atlin wearing button blankets. The button blanket in the photograph on page 110 has a design on the back. The photograph is not detailed enough to make out the design.

Annie Ned talks about button blankets and moose-hoof blankets at a potlatch for her grandmother's grave. She was about ten years old at the time (between 1890 and 1900) and says:

> That time I saw it--old-fashioned. They danced with old-fashioned clothes, blankets, button blankets, moose-hoof blankets--I've got that kind, too; I made it myself. (Cruikshank 1990: 312)

The Kluane Museum of Natural History in Burwash Landing has a button blanket in its collection. See figure # 366 for the backpack motif. My friend Carina Yerly is modeling the blanket. There is little information about this button blanket but when I showed a photograph of the blanket to Marge Jackson, she said she felt that she could have made it. Marge Jackson explained the simple geometric design on the back for me. She said that the square design was to represent a pack sack. A pack sack would be symbolic of an essential item for when you are on a journey. When I talked to Diane Strand about the button blanket she said that Annie Ned's button blanket had the same design.

Figure # 366, Button Blanket. 1975.6, KMNH.

Another button blanket, or should I say button robe, is in the MacBride Museum collection. See the photograph in figure # 367. This robe also has a geometric pattern on the back with the same style outline as the blanket at the Kluane Museum of Natural History, but the design is more elaborate. See figure # 368 for what appears to be the same button blanket in an undated photograph from the Jim Whyard fonds from Yukon Archives.

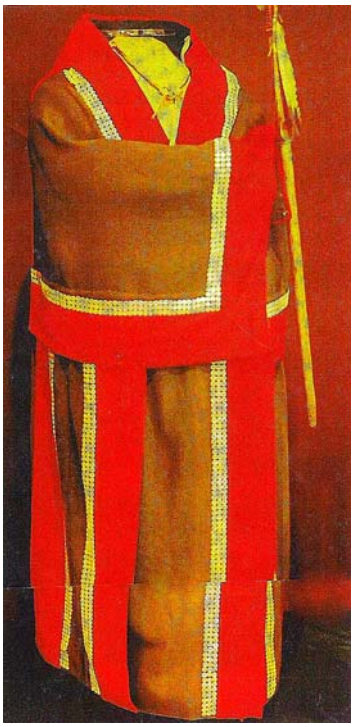


Figure # 367, Button Robe. MacBride Museum.

Figure # 368. Jim Whyard fonds from Yukon Archives

In the next photograph, figure # 369, is my great uncle Eddy Isaac and his wife Sophie Isaac. This photograph was taken in May 1963 by Catharine McClellan. Mrs. Isaac is wearing a button blanket which appears to be done in the same style as the previously discussed button blankets; a broad band leading towards the back of the blanket.

Figure # 369. Mr. & Mrs. Eddy Isaac. Catharine McClellan photograph. CMC

In all the photographs of button blankets that I have seen of Yukon potlatches, the backs were never shown. The coastal Tlingits seemed to have had a practice to show the crest on the back of the button blanket to demonstrate which clan they belonged to. In other photographs from the Yukon or Alaska, other than the two I have mentioned above, I have never seen one of the back of the blanket either. I have seen people showing at least the sides and the backs of the Chilkat blankets when they were wearing them. In one case the man is wearing the Chilkat robe over his chest in the front in order to show the back of the robe! In the next photograph of the Atlin potlatch there are at least six button blankets and not a single one is showing the back. See figure # 370 and also see figures # 101 on page 128 and # 330 on page 314, where the people wearing the button blankets are facing to the front and not showing their backs. Note that in figures # 98 and # 326 the man wearing the Chilkat robe is showing the back of the robe. Slightly off topic, in figure # 370, the child in the right front row appears to be wearing what may be a rabbit skin robe.

Figure # 370. Atlin Inland Tlingit potlatch photograph. Circa 1918. Courtesy of Atlin Historical Society.

Today making button blankets is popular and a crest is always added to the back, even for Athapaskans. This would seem to be a borrowed idea from the coastal Tlingits. The Chilkat robes shown in photographs of potlatches or ceremonies were either traded into the interior from the coast or the owner was from the coast. In figure # 371 is a Chilkat blanket from a 1949 Rolf Hougen photograph. Although Annie Ned is a Southern Tutchone and identified herself as a Yukon Indian woman, she is wearing the Chilkat blanket during a performance at Winter Carnival.

Figure # 371, Annie Ned wearing a Chilkat blanket from Klukwan, Alaska. Rolf Hougen Photograph.

When I showed this photograph to Marge Jackson she stated that her father, Little Jim, got this blanket from Haines, Alaska. She said they cost lots. Later when the blanket was folded and put in storage, squirrels got to it and chewed out sections. Those areas were repaired with the large white circles seen at the front of the blanket. The blanket was later stolen. Marge stated that other local people also had these Chilkat blankets. Annie Ned is wearing a hide jacket and a button blanket. In her headdress she is wearing the popular feather plume as is Johnny Fraser on the left.

Face painting and tattooing

Face painting was a common activity in the early Yukon. This was done during celebrations, potlatches, berry picking, etc. In fact face painting was wide spread and more common than mask use. An early reference is made by Robert Campbell when he was on his trip down the Yukon River, somewhere up the Pelly River in 1851:

> These Indians are very fond of ornaments of any kind; such as ear-rings, & also decorate their dress freely with ermine or squirrel skins or tails, duck wings, long hair, &c. They also often daub their faces with red earth or ochre &c... (Wright 1967: 67)

Faces were painted for potlatches, sunburn protection, other ceremonies, or even just for the fun of it. In *My Old People Say* Catherine McClellan writes about such occasions:

> Southern Tutchone women tell how in earlier days their mothers and grandmothers always stopped to play tag and run races in open sunny spaces. They sang songs appropriate for such outings. They also painted their faces with red ochre, apparently just to be in keeping with the general festive mood. (McClellan 2001: 200)

McClellan also writes:

> We have seen that Southern Tutchone woman used to paint "when they were going to pick berries." They also did it "when they went out to have a good time as a young girl," as well as for more formal festive occasions.
> The Southern Tutchone had three different kinds of red paint. The first kind, made from red ochre is available in their own country, but the other two kinds were brought by the Chilkat traders. One was a red powder which the Chilkats themselves got from whites. It was probably vermilion. The other was a kind of fungus which the Chilkat got from tall coastal trees-most likely cottonwoods-during the springtime.(...) Powered Charcoal served for black. People used to dip their fingers into the powder and then touch their finger tips all over their faces to make dots. Men used black for war party paint, and occasionally as a sign that they were angry, but black could also be used for festive face painting. For Potlatches, peace ceremonies, and the like, a person might put on either black or red or both." (McClellan 2001: 320)

McClellan goes on to say that each moiety had a set design, but people could also create their own individual designs. I have not come across any Yukon designs that have been identified as either clan, other than in George Emmons' *The Tlingit Indians* on pages 36 and 37 where he shows sketches of the various clan designs. Below I have copied the Wolf on the left and Crow clan face designs on the right as a reference in figure # 372. Maybe the interior people used similar designs to represent their clans.

Figure # 372. Tlingit Wolf and Crow clan face designs. UvK Drawing.

McKennan states the following about Upper Tanana face painting:

> On festive occasions the Upper Tanana men paint faces with charcoal and red ocher. The decoration consists of a few bars across the face and about the eye of the whole upper face may be smeared with color. Such face painting generally with red and black, is common throughout the Athapaskan areas, where it is almost always confined to the males. (McKennan 1959: 85)

McKennan's description of face painting seems a lot like the face designs that were painted on the Inland Tlingits ganhooks that have been shown in figures # 338 on page 322, # 339 on page 323 and # 348 on page 329. In addition McKennan stated that mostly men painted their faces. As you can see from the other comments and photographs in this section this is not the case, at least for the southern Yukon. It might be that McKennan only referred to the Upper Tanana people.

The late 1940s seems to have been the last time people used masks, face painting and tattooing. See figure # 373 for a photograph of Lydia Kushniruk and Stella Jim at a winter carnival in Whitehorse in the late 1940s.

Figure # 373, Lydia Kushniruk and Stella Jim's face painted designs. 1940s Yukon Winter Carnival. R. Hougan photograph.

Elder Gary Sam described a Northern Tutchone face painted design which he called "Pretty Woman" design. This design is meant to enhance the eyes. See figure # 374 for an example painted on the face of my daughter Shadunjen.

Figure # 374, Northern Tutchone "Pretty Woman's" design. UvK Collection.

Gary Sam described the chin tattooing that was also done to be pretty. See figure # 375. This is what Catherine McClellan wrote about tattooing:

> As far as I know, in all tribes the aboriginal tattooing was the facial tattooing done to higher class women. Charcoal blackened sinew was pulled under the skin. The process was evidently a painful one which caused the chin to swell up for quite a long period. The only design mentioned in all three tribes was a series of black lines radiating from the mouth to the outer edges of the chin. One Southern Tutchone said each line represented a big party, another said that "chiefs' daughters" were tattooed, while an Inland Tlingit woman simply said that there were "always" five black lines. A Northern Tutchone woman from Selkirk has seven lines. (McClellan 2001: 319)

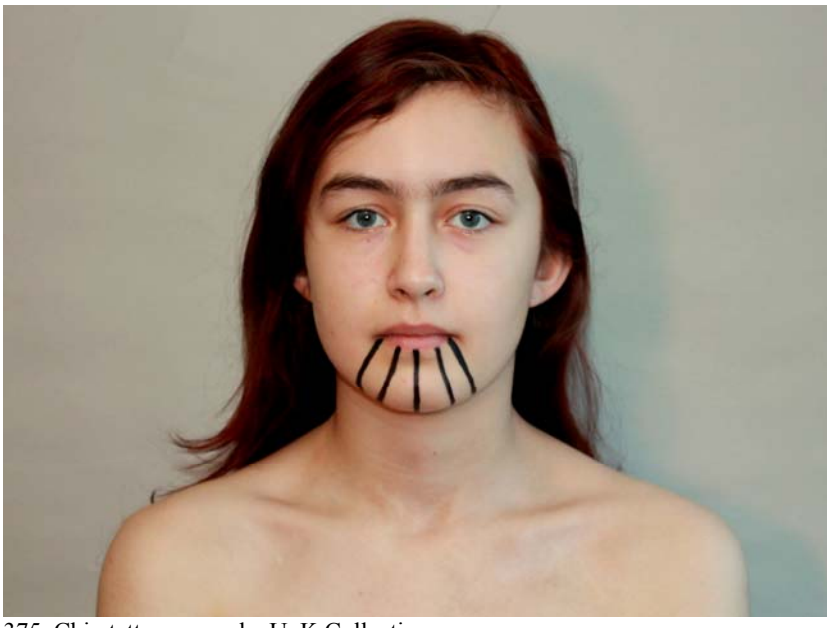


Figure # 375. Chin tattoo example. UvK Collection.

McKennan states:

> Among the Upper Tanana only the women were tattooed. This decoration was largely confined to the face, the favorite design consisting of a series of vertical lines on the chin and one or two horizontal lines across the cheeks; occasionally a few bars were also put on the backs of wrists. Both the needle-and-thread and the pricking method were used, usually the latter, powered charcoal constituting the pigment. (McKennan 1959: 87)

In Alexander Murray's drawings of Gwich'in people from the late 1840s we can see the same woman's lines that McClellan described for men. The drawings show additional lines and both in red and black. These lines may have been painted instead of tattooed because of the use of both black and red. I have not heard of red tattoos. These drawings can be seen, starting on page 65 of *Part of the Land, Part of the Water*. It appears that male facial tattooing depended on which group of people the person belonged to, as the Upper Tanana males did not tattoo their faces while it seems the Gwich'in males did.

From the late 1940s to the 1980s there were no public examples of masks or face painting. It was during this time that First Nations people were in the final stages of the transition from a traditional life style to living in a modern western society. It was also a time when most of the earlier art styles vanished, leaving a cultural void in the Yukon.

Masks

Traditionally, masks in the Yukon were relatively rare. They were mainly used for two purposes: by shamans for direct contact with their animal spiritual helper and for or by an important person at potlatches and other celebrations. As a result of this scant use, I have not discovered a single physical example of an early Yukon mask. My search included over forty museums in North America and Europe. I have also looked at tens of thousands of photographs. I have located only four early Yukon photographs that have Yukon masks. These four photographs were all taken before 1920. I must add that the neighboring peoples to the Yukon First Nations, the Coastal Tlingits as well as Alaskan Athapaskans in the Lower Yukon River region did make a lot of masks. From the late 1940s until the 1980s there is a mask-making gap and no Yukon made masks are in public view. In the late 1980s, the coastal Tlingit style mask was introduced into the Yukon by Keith Wolf Smarch and became what many people consider the traditional Yukon First Nations mask. These are not traditional style Yukon First Nations masks but rather a stop gap to fill the losses in our local visual culture, much like dream catchers and the use of sweet grass. Contrary to masks, face painting and to a lesser extent face tattooing, were widespread.

In my interviews with carvers and Elders it became apparent that the most common use of masks in public was for potlatches, either for a burial or celebration. Some people still remember these masks, as there were a number of mask makers who were still alive just a few years ago. In many of the examples of early Yukon made masks, the representations are of humans. These masks were photographed at potlatches and gatherings. This suggests that they were not shaman but potlatch masks. There are examples of non-human masks also.

It seems that there was only one mask maker in a given area. The mask maker's output was quite small during his lifetime. Each mask maker had a slightly different approach to the making of a mask. Catherine McClellan mentioned that the masks were limited to those areas closest to the coastal Tlingits (being the Southern Tutchone, Tagish and Inland Tlingits). This is clearly not the case since the Northern Tutchone, Han and the Kaska also made and used

masks. I will start with the early Kaska masks. This is what John Honigmann in *The Kaska Indians* writes of the Upper Liard Indians during various potlatches and feasts:

> Potlatch dancers painted their faces grotesquely and costumed themselves in sheep and wolf skins, half-finished coats, absurd headgear, and sheep horns-all provoking considerable amusement for the spectators. Wolf's-head masks might be worn by members of that moiety. (Honigmann 1964: 70)

And:

> When the gifts had all been allocated, a rawhide curtain was erected in the dwelling, supported from two poles held by members of the host's moiety. Members of the potlatch's group retired behind the curtain and decorated themselves with masks, feathers, and animal skins for dancing. Members of the opposite moiety painted the faces of like-sex dancers. (...) When they were ready the dancers called for the curtain to be removed and began dancing to the rhythm of drums and potlatch songs. After one moiety had performed, the guests allowed their faces to be painted and in turn danced. (Honigmann 1964: 73)

And more:

> During the potlatch people performed and clowned while covered with bark masks, the features of which were outlined with charcoal. Other masks came from the head skins of black and grizzly bears, the goat, and sheep. (Honigmann 1964: 73-74)

The first mask I will examine is a Han mask shown in a photograph taken in Eagle, Alaska during a potlatch in 1907 in figure # 332 on page 317. The mask is referred to in the book *Han: People of the river* in page 188:

> The Eagle Village potlatch photo from 1907 (Figure 33) illustrates yet another convergence of traditional and western-style dress. (...) The most striking objects, nevertheless, are the men's pointed tasseled caps. Han outfits of this kind have never been photographed since, so it is not known how long they stayed in fashion. Perhaps the biggest mystery of the photo is the wolf-head mask and cape worn by the young man crouched in front of the group, perhaps associated with some kind of shamanic dance. (Mishler & Simeone 2004: 188)

See figure # 376 for my sketch of the mask from the photograph. The person wearing the mask is Edward Wood. Edward Wood is listed in the "Isaac, Wood, and Simon Family Tree" in Appendix D, page 260 of *Han: People of the River*. Edward Wood is the son of Jonathon Wood from the Eagle Village area and therefore a member of the Han people.
In the photograph I can make out that the mask is a half-mask, sitting on top of the wearer's head and only covering the top half of his face. Fur attached to the back of the mask covers the wearer's back. The hide appears to be a wolf, which would seem logical. In the text above, the writer suggests that this mask may be related to a kind of shamanic dance. Other possibilities would be that the dancer is representing the wolf moiety, or that the mask represents the dancer's animal spirit guide.

Figure # 376, Han Wolf mask, from Eagle Potlatch, 1907. UvK drawing.

More about masks and potlatches is written in *The Kaska Indians*, of the Upper Liard Indians during various potlatches and feasts:

> Potlatch dancers painted their faces grotesquely and costumed themselves in sheep and wolf skins, half-finished coats, absurd headgear, and sheep horns-all provoking considerable amusement for the spectators. Wolf's-head masks might be worn by members of that moiety. (Honigmann 1964: 70)

And:

> When the gifts had all been allocated, a rawhide curtain was erected in the dwelling, supported from two poles held by members of the host's moiety. Members of the potlatch's group retired behind the curtain and decorated themselves with masks, feathers, and animal skins for dancing. Members of the opposite moiety painted the faces of like-sex dancers.(...) When they were ready the dancers called for the curtain to be removed and began dancing to the rhythm of drums and potlatch songs. After one moiety had performed the guest allowed their faces to be painted and in turn danced. (Honigmann 1964: 73)

And more:

> During the potlatch people performed and clowned while covered with bark masks, the features of which were outlined with charcoal. Other masks came from the head skins of black and grizzly bears, the goat, and sheep. (Honigmann 1964: 73-74)

During the Kaska dances people dressed in various ways to assume animal roles, including wolves. This was a practice that happened throughout the Yukon and surrounding areas. See figure # 377 of a ceremonial Tahltan caribou head-dress mask. This artifact is in the Museum of the American Indian collection in Washington DC and was originally collected by George Emmons in 1911 from British Columbia.

Figure # 377, Tahltan Caribou headdress-mask, 010853.000, NMAI.

I would like to comment on Mishler & Simeone's statement in *Han: People of the River*: "Han outfits of this kind have never been photographed since, so it is not known how long they stayed in fashion." The shirts the men were wearing were transitional outfits, that is, using store bought or traded clothing and adding details to make them into ceremonial shirts. In older photographs you will see other examples of this trend such as in figure # 334 on page 319 where the Northern Tutchone Mayo men are wearing the same combination shirts as well as the shirt that Johnny Fraser is wearing in figure # 333 on page 318. I am estimating that by World War Two these shirts fell into disuse as I a have not seen other examples of them. The photographs from the 1940s do not show this type of shirt. I would also add that the use of the beaded style 'dance shirt' was probably limited to the southern Yukon as I have not seen examples of these shirt in the north-central Yukon.

When I talked with Gordon Peter from Ross River, he remembered seeing Mr. Joe Ladue's masks years ago. Mr. Joe Ladue was an Elder from the Ross River area who passed away in the early 1970s. Mr. Joe Ladue was born around 1890-95 and was that area's mask maker. Gordon made an owl mask based on an example of one of Joe's masks that Gordon saw when he was a teenager. This mask looks a bit like a human face with owl features with pointed ears and large eyes. Gordon is one of the very few mask carvers who works in the style that is traceable to pre-1940. The only photograph of Kaska masks depicts human faces. See figure # 378 for a photograph taken in the 1920s of a group of people in Ross River. Note the close up photograph of a man holding the two face masks in figure # 379. These are fairly large masks and appear to be made out of wood.

These may be examples of masks that were created in the Yukon after the Gold Rush era, when First Nations people became more settled and adopted a more western lifestyle. Larger wooden masks could now be made, since people built more permanent dwellings to return to and store the masks. In this photograph it appears that everybody is dressed in their best clothes which would indicate that there was some function or event happening. The masks appear to be of elder men with white beards. They look to be of a size that would fit

comfortably over a man's face. Are these faces of people who have passed away and these are their potlatch death masks? Or are they masks to represent past important people in Kaska or Northern Tutchone history? There were many Northern Tutchone living in the Ross River area at that time. The original Pelly River people were all killed by the Liard River people and the resulting void was filled by Francis Lake Kaska and Northern Tutchone. Sometime in the mid-twentieth century the Northern Tutchone moved to the Little and Big Salmon areas. Around the same time period the Mountain Dene moved into the Ross River area.

Figure # 378. Group of people in their best clothes in Ross River around the 1920s, Bill Hare fonds, 6951, Yukon Archives.

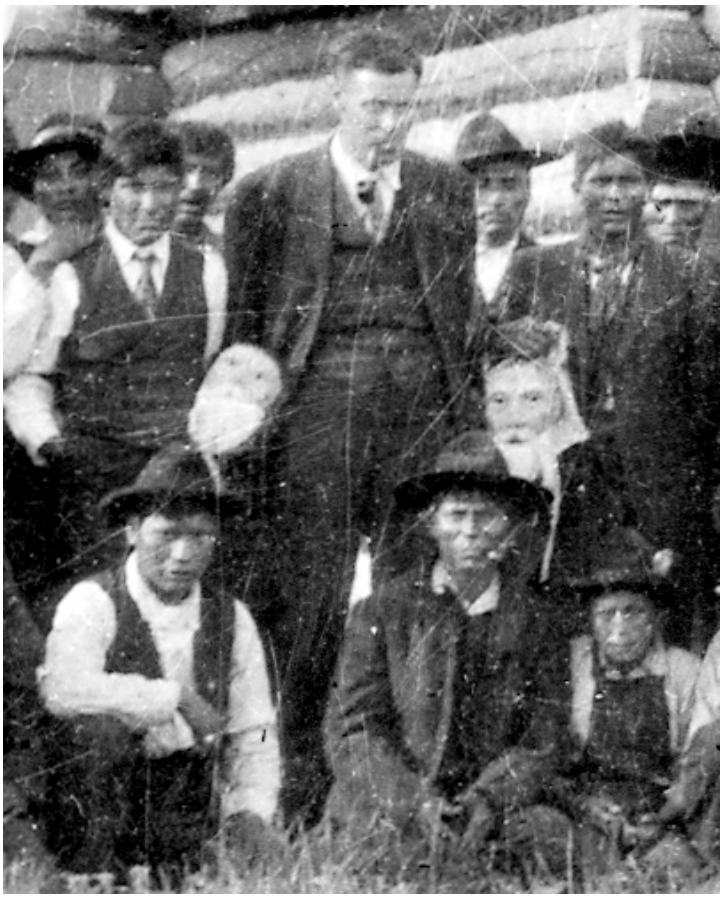


Figure # 379. Detail of a man holding two masks in Ross River around the 1920s, Bill Hare fonds, 6951, Yukon Archives.

Northern Tutchone Elder Mr. Gary Sam remembers seeing those types of face masks along with other masks such as Bear, Wolf and Crow. At the time he was a child attending potlatches in the Carmacks area in the 1940s. See figure # 380 of a drawing of the face mask that Mr. Gary Sam remembers seeing. Mr. Sam says that he remembers seeing ten masks at a large potlatch when people came from all over the Yukon to participate. He also said that the masks were ugly looking faces with hair, mustaches and beards made of horse hair. His description of masks is exactly like the masks in the Ross River photograph above. The masks were made out of poplar tree. Mr. Sam states that there are no examples of these masks left, because they were placed in the grave houses of the persons who owned the masks. Later, tourists stole the contents of those gravehouses.

Figure # 380. Ukjese van Kampen's drawing of face mask as described by Carmacks Elder Mr. Gary Sam.

In the Whitehorse area Mr. Bill Scurvey was a mask maker. This deceased Elder only made four masks in his lifetime. He taught his son Gordon Scurvey, also known as Gwada, the skills of mask making and Gwada has told me about how Mr. Bill Scurvey made his masks. The masks that Mr. Bill Scurvey made were only for funeral potlatches. Gwada stated that the carver would find a large protruding knot in a tree and carved the face mask right on the knot. Once the face was done, the carver used an adz to chop the mask out of the tree. Once the mask was free of the tree the back of the mask would be hollowed out and prepared for use. If the people were sad to see the person pass away, the mask was made sad. If the people were glad to see the person gone from this world, the face was made happy! The hair for the mask was obtained from the deceased person. The mask was used until the tree died at which point the mask also lost its spirit and at that time the mask was burned. This is another reason why there are no early Yukon First Nations masks to be examined. See figure # 381 of my sketch of the carving process. Gwada noted that these masks were more basic in design and rougher in finish than the present-day Tlingit style masks now being made in the Yukon.

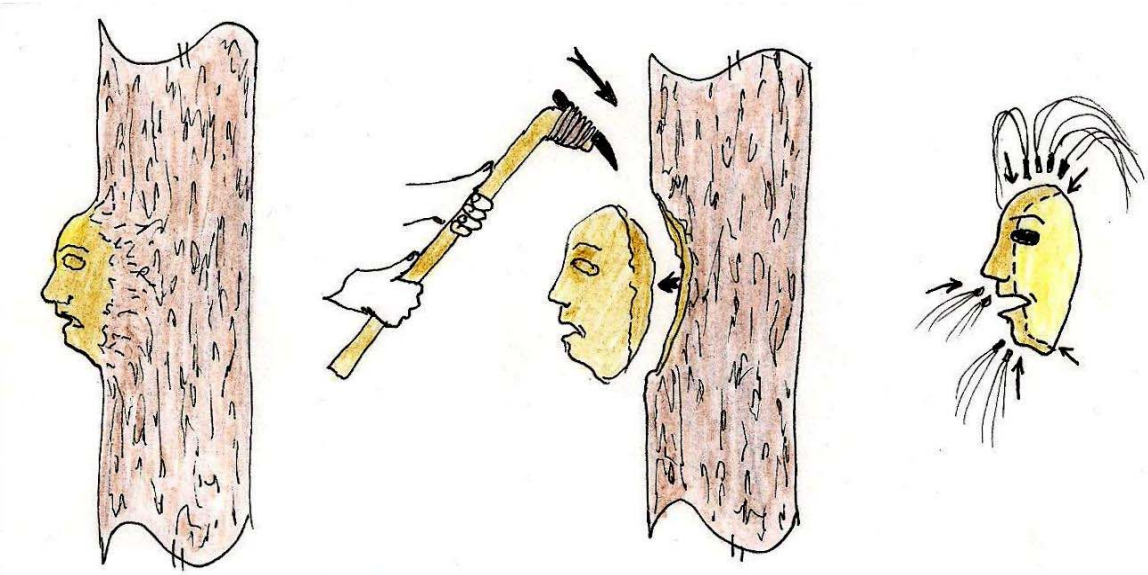


Figure # 381. Ukjese van Kampen's drawing of the face mask making procedure as described by Mr. Gordon Scurvey.

Here is an additional note on the use of hair on masks. Southern Yukon First Nations people believe that the person's essence remains in the hair, nails clipping and so on. If an evil person gets a hold of someone's hair, he or she can cause harm to the owner of the hair. So these items were burned in order to protect the owner. This leads me to think that human hair of a living person would not be used on a mask unless the mask was intended to be cremated or buried with the body.

The Inland Tlingit people also made this style of human faced masks as we can see in the 1915 photograph of a Potlatch in Teslin. See figure # 382 of a photograph of the group of people at Teslin Lake. Note that there are at least four masks in this photograph. Two women on the right are wearing human face masks while two men on the left are wearing masks, one a human face and the other appears to be an animal mask of some type. The masks worn by the women appear to be human females while the mask on the man appears to be a male face mask. This photograph proves that females did wear masks and from the positioning in the photograph, in front of everybody in the group, they seem to be women of power and prestige. The animal type mask worn by the man has some bird characteristics to it, maybe Crow. This man has an image on his dance shirt that looks like Crow, so maybe the mask is also Crow, thus representing his clan. Also note that there are at least two ganhooks in the photograph as well as two button blankets and what appears to be a hide cape. Two of the people are wearing dance shirts and there are also a couple of duster-style feather dance and hat pieces. This photograph is a good example of a people who have adopted the western material culture but still retain the symbols of their own culture. They are using western society's materials such as manufactured clothing as well as cloth and wool. They have rendered this material into their own cultural identity in the form of dance shirts and button blankets. See figure # 383 for a close up of the two women with masks.

Figure # 382. Mask wearers at Teslin Potlatch, 1915. Glenbow Museum Archives, NA-1663-38.

Figure # 383. Women Mask wearers at Teslin Potlatch, 1915. Glenbow Museum Archives, NA-1663-38.

As we can see from the photographs above the early Inland Tlingit masks were almost identical to Athapaskan masks. Likewise, the other art images have the same style and feel as the images from the rest of the Yukon. It appears that any of the early masks that were in the coastal Tlingit style were imported from the coast. The ties between the coastal Tlingits and the Inland Tlingit and Tagish were very strong and if a person wanted something for a special occasion, he or she could order it from the coast. We will see an example of this happening in the 1912 Carcross potlatch photograph in figure # 333 on page 318, where the mask is shown slightly right of center and is imported from the coast.

The differences in wood had an effect on the carving capabilities of the interior people. This is what Catherine McClellan says about this subject in *My Old People Say*:

> The magnificent woodworking of the coastal tribes makes the efforts of their interior neighbors appear rather slight. However, most interior woods are crooked grained and the timber relatively small. Nor did the semi-nomadic existence of the interior people foster the kinds of massive construction which interested the coastal people. (McClellan 2001: 253)

The Coastal Tlingit style masks made their way into the Yukon through trade with the interior people, mainly the Inland Tlingits and Tagish. The photograph above was of the 1912 Carcross potlatch put on by Mr. Skookum Jim for the tombstone of Mr. Dawson Charlie. For this potlatch Mr. Skookum Jim ordered a number of items from the coast that may have included the mask. McClellan comments on this photograph and refers to the coastal Tlingits as Tlingits:

> Although nobody now seems to have one, a few Tlingit-style masks or mask headdresses were also part of recent southern Yukon ceremonial paraphernalia. In the postcard of a big Tagish potlatch held in 1912 one man holds a large wooden mask of otter (?), while a second wears a feather headdress with a small mask on the foreground. (McClellan 2001: 323)

McClellan identifies a second smaller mask in the group which is not visible in this photograph. I do not believe that this second 'mask' is a mask since it is held like a rattle. I think it is a rattle with a face carved on it.

I would like to note that while the faces that were carved in the Yukon are described by McClellan as 'rather slight' when compared to the coastal Tlingit masks, this was not always the case. Look at the fine workmanship in various carved artifacts I have examined already, such as the carved pipes shown in figure # 252 on page 246 and # 253 on page 247. The earlier Yukon First Nations masks were rare and McClellan may not have seen many, or any, Yukon interior style masks during her research. I have not seen a single Yukon made mask from before the 1980s.

As mentioned earlier, while Yukon First Nations did not make a great deal of masks, the Athapaskans from the lower, and parts of the middle, Yukon River in present day Alaska made many masks. It is said that they were influenced by the Alaskan Eskimos and some of their masks reflect this. At the same time many of their masks look just like the human face masks that were made in the Yukon. It seems that mask making was at least wide spread with the people in Alaska and while less common, was also widespread in at least the south-central Yukon.

Headdresses

There are too many hat and headdress styles to catalogue in this paper and I have already shown different examples throughout this thesis. Here I include a sampling of hats and headdresses that Yukon First Nations people used. At the time the hide tunics were made the hide hood was the most common type of headdress. The pattern was pretty well the same over the whole region, with variation in embroidered or beaded patterns. See figure # 384 for two examples of the hoods that were part of the person's everyday clothing. The hood on the left is from the Royal Ontario Museum while the hood on the right is from the Peabody Museum in Boston. Another example can be seen on display in the Anchorage Museum in figure # 59 on page 86 and in the Alaska State Museum in Juneau Alaska in figure # 385. It appears that the whole outfit was made at the same time: the hood, tunic and pants.

Figure # 384. Hood style headdresses. Left: Han 953.160.3, ROM. Right Athapaskan hood. Peabody Museum.

The left hood was collected in 1908 from the Yukon Territory and is listed as probably Han. It has colourful porcupine embroidery around the opening that is similar to Gwich'in embroidery. Being neighbours to each other this would not be surprising. The hood on the right has Tanaina style embroidery and has the additional fur strips attached. The hood shown in the display below is listed as Tanaina.


Figure # 385. Hood style headdresses. Alaska State Museum.

For ceremonies there were other headdresses used made out of feathers, furs and bear claws. The bear claw headdresses were used from at least the central Northwest Territories in the east to the interior and coast of Alaska. The bear claw headdresses were generally made in the same fashion: a series of claws attached to a hide band. These headdresses are reported to have been worn by shamans. There are many examples of these bear claw headdresses in museum collections. This makes me suspect they were also worn by other important people. In figure # 386 is an example from the Burke Museum collection. This headdress was collected by George Emmons in the Upper Stikine River from the Tahltans in 1909. It is made from the fore claw of a grizzly bear and the museum information states that this headdress was worn during dance and ceremonial occasions.


Figure # 386. Bear claw headdresses. 2674, Burke Museum.

Once beads and cloth arrived in the area there was an explosion in various hat designs. Each hat was unique. In figures # 387 and 388 are animal related hats in the Kluane Museum of Natural History and the MacBride Museum.

In the Kluane Museum of Natural History is a Lynx hat on display. It has the fur head of a lynx mounted on top of a hide cap and was made by Ms. Maggie Jim.

Figure # 387, Lynx hat. 1975.57, KMNH.

Another hat of the same style is on display at the MacBride Museum. This hat is an animal fur head mounted on a cap. The cap has Inland Tlingit or Tagish style beadwork on the sides. While I have not seen other examples, these two would suggest that this may have been a common style in the past and may be related in use to the animal head mask and headdress shown in figures # 376 page 353 and # 377 on page 354. In the same photograph is a beaded cap that is fashioned like the military style wedge with Southern Tutchone-Tagish style beadwork on it.

Figure # 388, hats at the MacBride Museum.

Another ‘wedge’ style hat is a Tahltan hat from the Glenbow Museum (figure # 389). This hat was purchased from Mr. William Helmer in 1965. The hat is originally from a village close to Telegraph Creek, BC. It is made of wolf fur and cloth and has the common zigzag motif running along the bottom. Another wedge type hide headdress can be seen being worn by Patsy Henderson in figure # 177 on page 193.

Figure # 389, Tahltan hat. AC 50, Glenbow Museum.

There are headdresses shown on old postcards which give an example of the range of headdress styles. See figures # 85 on page 115 of Patsy Henderson wearing a unique headdress: a bishop style headdress and holding two rattles. There are other places in northwestern North America where these pointed hats were used, but this is the only example I have seen from the Yukon. Henderson is wearing his well known hide outfit. Because of the designs on the rattles I am inclined to think they were traded in from the coast.

In the postcard below in figure # 390 Henderson is wearing a headdress that appears to be made from feathers and fur. He is also wearing the Chilkat Tlingit shirt that Skookum Jim ordered for the famous 1912 Carcross potlatch. This shirt was worn by Billy Bone in the 1912 photograph.

Figure # 390, Patsy Henderson with fancy hat. Undated postcard.

The last two I will show are feather type headdresses. These specimens are in the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin. They are listed as Thayonik which seems to be another name for the Gwich'in. The type of feathers used is unknown. I am assuming that these headdresses would only be used during celebrations and potlatches as they would have been somewhat fragile.

Figure # 391, Thayonik (Gwich'in) feather headdresses. Left: IVA 6107, right: IVA 6106. Ethnologisches Museum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

Feather plumes & wanes

As seen in the 1912 Carcross potlatch- as well as in other photographs dance feather fans were used during potlatches and celebrations. In figure # 392 is an example of two Tahltan feather fans. On the left is an eagle feather fan and on the right what appears to be a swan feather fan.

Figure # 392, Tahltan dance feather fans. Left: 248450, swan (?) feather fan. Right: Eagle feather fan. NMNH.

While these are dance fans of bigger birds, smaller feather fans were also used. Even today grouse tail feather dance fans are made. They are used in the southern Yukon in the 'Grouse Dance' in which the male dances the way a male grouse would act when trying to attract the female.

Over the course of this book there have been a number of images of feather plumes used either in hats or as dance wanes. In some of the photographs the plumes appear to be store bought dusters. I think that the dusters simply replaced the previous ornaments made from bird feathers or animal tails. In the Canadian Museum of Civilization there is a grave ornament that was collected by C.H.D. Clarke in August 1944 from a grave near Snag, Yukon. See figure # 393. The artifact catalogue card states:

> "Stick decorated with feathers (some dyed with aneline dyes) including probably woodpecker tails. Placed above grave, on a long pole, in one corner of picket fence around the grave of Tutchone Indians of Osgoode, on White River, near town of Snag, Yukon Territory, about 25 miles east of Alaska-Yukon Boundary. Dr. Clarke collected the specimen on Aug. 17, 1944 and says these Indians are related to Burwash Landing, Kloo Lake, Kluane Village, Coffee Creek, Welseley Lake, Carmacks and Selkirk people. They speak almost the same language as those of Great Slave Lake."

This ornament has been quite weathered, indicating it was on its pole for a long time before it was removed by Dr. Clarke. While this would be an unethical act today, it did preserve the ornament for research. In this ornament a series of feathers were banded together in rows along the length of the approximately 20 inch stick.

Figure # 393, feather grave ornament. VI-Q-43, CMC.

The above grave ornament was made by the Tutchone but this style of ornament was quite popular over the whole region. Grave ornaments were common in many Southern and Northern Tutchone graveyards but no other early examples have survived that I know of. I will be examining some early grave yards in the last section of this chapter. In the Klukshu Museum there are a number of these plumes, or in reality, dusters. These items were often placed in the headdresses of dancers. In the past dancers also used feather fans and these may have been thought of as the same thing. See two examples of Klukshu Museum dance wane-dusters in figure # 394.

Figure # 394, dance wane-duster used to make dance outfits fancy. Klukshu Museum.

To illustrate the use of dance wanes, see the photograph in figure # 395. This is a Northern Tutchone celebration showing a group of men using the duster type dance wanes.

Figure # 395, Northern Tutchone celebration using dance wanes. Anglican Church Diocese of Yukon fonds. 89/41 #1020. YA.

Other examples of these duster type ornaments were can be seen in earlier figures: # 89 on page 118 on Jim Fox's hat, on Johnny Fraser's frontlet in figure # 94 on page 122 and again in figure # 192 on page 203. There is another view of the duster on the headdress of the man from Atlin holding the ganhook in figure # 101 on page 128. They were quite common in the first half of the twentieth century. This is another example of a rapid adoption of a new item, the duster, into Yukon First Nations culture.

Grave art

The final journey of the deceased person in this world is the burial. I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that we cremated but also buried. One of the earliest images of Yukon First Nations graves comes from Lt. Schwatka's 1883 Yukon exploration as seen in figure # 324 on page 307. Lt. Schwatka wrote the following about the Fort Selkirk graves in his book *Along Alaska's Great River*:

> A grave or burial place of the Ayan (or Iyan) Indians probably some three months old, planted on the very edge of the river bank near the site of old Fort Selkirk, was a type of the many we afterward saw at intervals from this point for about two-thirds of the distance to old Fort Yukon, (…) Before burial the body is bent with the knees up to the breast, so as to occupy as little longitudinal space as possible, and is inclosed in a very rough box of hewn boards two and three inches thick, cut by means of rude native axes, and is then buried in the ground, the lid of the coffin, if it can be called such, seldom being over a foot or a half below the surface of the pile. The grave's inclosure or fence is constructed of roughly-hewn boards, standing upright and closely joined edge to edge, four corner-posts being prolonged above, and somewhat neatly rounded into a bed-post design represented in the figure, from which they seldom depart. It was lasted at the top by a wattling of willow withes, the lower ends of the boards being driven a short way into the ground, while one or two intermediate stripes of red paint resemble other bands when viewed at a distance. From the grave itself is erected a long, light pole twenty or twenty-five feet in height, having usually a piece of colored cloth flaunting from its top; although in this particular instance the cloth itself was of a dirty white. Not far away, and always close enough to show that it is some superstitions adjunct of the grave itself, stands another pole of about equal height, to the top of which there is fastened a poorly carved wooden figure of a fish, duck, goose, bear, or some other animal or bird, this being, I believe, a sort of savage *totem* designating the family or sub-clan of the tribe which to the deceased belonged. (…) My own Indians (Chilkats) told me that they formerly placed the bodies of their dead on pole scaffoldings in the branches of trees near the river bank, somewhat after the manner of the Sioux and other Indian tribes of our great plains; and in one instance a very old, rotten and dilapidated scaffold in a tree was pointed out to me as having once served that purpose, although there were no indications to confirm the story; but these might have easily been obliterated. (Schwatka 1885: 215-220)

Schwatka's name for the Northern Tutchone people was Ayan. The descriptions of the Upper Tanana graves by McKennan in *The Upper Tanana Indians* are also very close to Schwatka's description above:

> Surmounting either the grave of the fence is a long pole to which are attached pennants or streamers. Sometimes a wooden cross, which is frequently of the Russian form, is also attached to the house of the fence. A few graves lack the cross and

> instead have a pole to which wooden figures are attached. (…) The Upper Tanana figures have geometric shapes, the diamond, chevron, and triangle occurring most frequently. The Indians deny any clan significance to them and insist that they make them simply because they look attractive. The only figure I saw that was even slightly realistic was crown-shaped. Its maker said it represented the sun, and its function was solely decorative. (McKennan 1959: 147)

It can be debated if the geometric and other shapes were more significant than just decoration. In my own research I have been told many times that decorations were added to make the item 'fancy'. This was always a safe answer to give and not necessarily wrong, but if the person did not know what the creator of the object intended you can only answer that you don't know or that it was to make it fancy. At first I wondered if the Upper Tanana people were totally truthful with McKennan about the poles having no meaning or maybe the meaning behind or purpose of the decorated poles were lost in time. When I researched the grave poles in Fort Selkirk I came across a similar situation. In reading the *Fort Selkirk Oral History* of 1984 and *Fort Selkirk Elders Oral History* of 1985, produced by the Yukon Government's Heritage Branch, I was surprised to read the interviews with Yukon First Nations Elders all stating that they did not know the meaning of the poles. All the people interviewed were born in the early twentieth century. Were the purpose and meaning of the poles and carvings not passed on to them? Tommy McGinty explained in the interview that young people did not attend the burial because of the danger of the ghost of the deceased person. The ghost may take over the young person's body. So from the time of the last traditional burials and creation of the poles to the time the Elders became old enough to attend the burials, knowledge about the poles vanished.

See the next photograph taken at Fort Selkirk with the grave poles. Also present are the various carvings on top of the poles as well as painted geometric designs painted on the gravehouses.

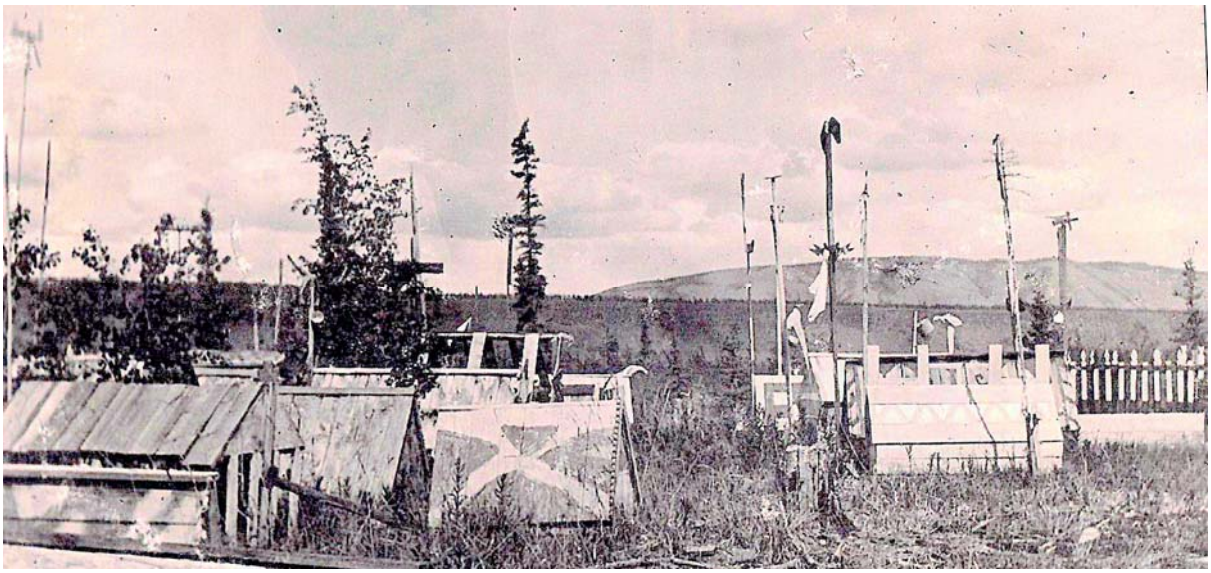


Figure # 396, First Nations graveyard Fort Selkirk. Swanson fonds 8571, YA.

The next photograph, also from Fort Selkirk, also shows the use of poles at the graves.

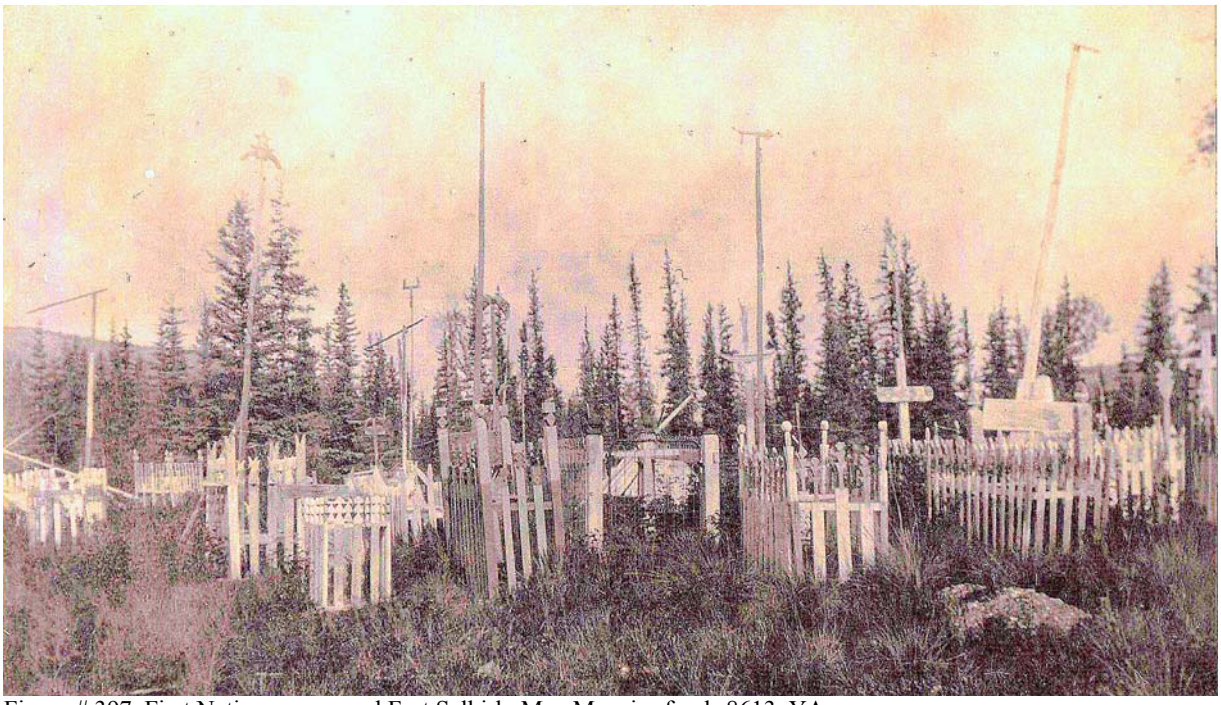


Figure # 397, First Nations graveyard Fort Selkirk. May Menzies fonds 8613, YA.

The two photographs in figure # 398 show examples of the geometric designs that are added to grave fences. These are in the form of a series of circles, triangles and diamonds at the top of the fence boards as well as the geometric shapes at the top of the grave poles. Both photographs are from Fort Selkirk and were taken in the early 1970s.

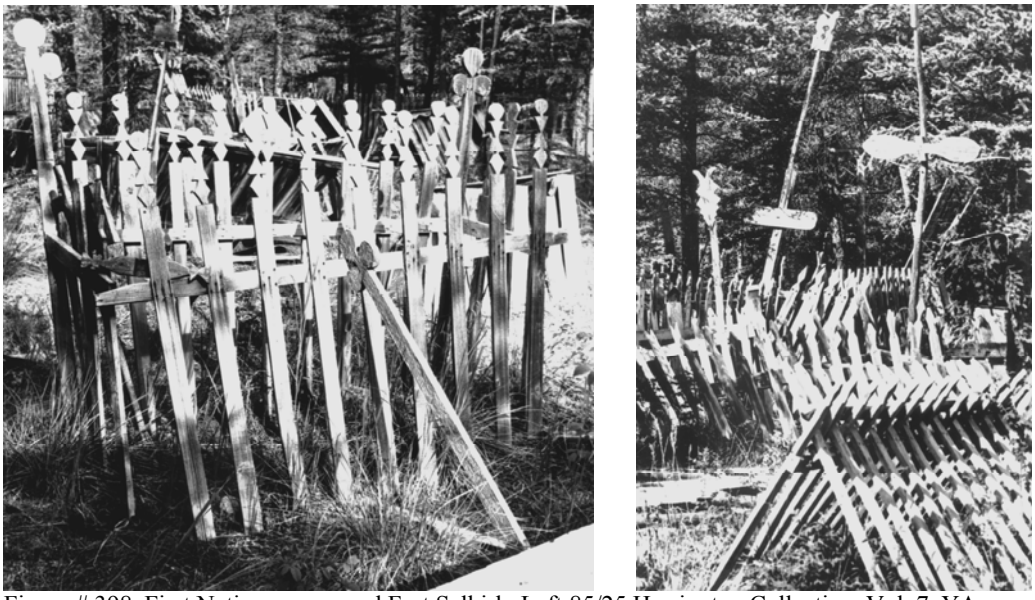


Figure # 398, First Nations graveyard Fort Selkirk. Left:85/25 Harrington Collection, Vol. 7, YA.

In the next photograph is a grave yard in Hutshi which was an important Southern Tutchone settlement. It was later abandoned because it was not located along any rivers or highways in post World War Two Yukon and thus became isolated.

Figure # 399, First Nations graveyard at Hutshi. MacBride Museum collection Vol. 2, 3861, YA.

There are poles in this photograph but note that the gravehouses are on stilts. Is this reminiscent of the days when we placed the deceased on pole scaffoldings in the branches of trees?

As usual, early Athapaskans used a lot of geometric designs in the graveyards while the Inland Tlingit sometimes depicted various figures. In the next photograph in figure # 400 is an image of birds that was painted on a grave marker. The scene is obscured in the photograph since below the bird are two baby birds in a nest. This image was painted in the same manner as the birds painted on the canvases shown in figure # 330 on page 314. They are both presented crest-like with the head in profile. What makes this image interesting is that Leechman, when he took the photograph in 1948 at the Teslin graveyard, identified the bird as an eagle. Yet Catharine McClellan identifies this bird as Crow with its young. If Leechman is correct, this may be one of the rarely painted eagles. I also tend to think that this bird is an eagle. The deceased person may have belonged to the Eagle clan (Wolf moiety) and it would make sense to have the eagle on his grave marker. There is also a line on the neck which would indicate a bald headed eagle. It is a bit puzzling that the whole head, except the eyes, is painted in solid with a dark colour, presumably black. The photograph is in black and white so the image could be rendered in a dark colour like red. There is another twist as to the identity of this bird. In the Yukon, the Crow is male. On the Coast, the Eagle moiety is also male while Raven is female. Both birds feed the young as parents but I have not come across a story of Crow tending to its young. I have however come across stories of eagles and their young in the nest. The only way to find out for sure if this is an Eagle or Crow is to find out the clan the deceased person was a member of. On the grave marker is written “Mr(s) TOM KOKLAW DEAD Oct. 4. 192_ AGE 80 YRS”. See figure # 400 for the photograph of the eagle on the left and my drawing of the bird on the right for clarity. Note that the bird has ovoid shapes in the wings and tail which I am assuming is a reference to the coastal Tlingit use of ovoid shapes in their art.

Figure # 400. Eagle on grave marker. Teslin 1948. D. Leechman's photograph, J2377, CMC & UvK drawing.

The next bird image is on a grave of Lake Laberge area hereditary chief Mundessa, who was born in 1825 or 1826 and died in either 1921, as shown on the grave marker, or in 1925, as is listed in *Whitehorse Area Chiefs 1989 to 1998.* On his stone grave marker, which is located at the Whitehorse Indian Cemetery, is a bird presumably representing Crow and therefore he would have belonged to the Crow clan. The bird is painted in typical Athapaskan style, which is in flight and only in silhouette. The bird is in purple instead of the expected black but the paint may have discoloured over the years. See figure # 401.

Figure # 401. Bird painted on Mundessa's grave marker, Whitehorse, Yukon.

While I have not discovered any carving of wolves in any form I have seen statues of wolves in First Nations cemeteries that were purchased and placed on the graves to represent the deceased person's clan. There seems to have been a tradition in the early twentieth century of purchasing stone statues of wolves as grave markers. Below I show two examples. At the Whitehorse Indian cemetery is a wolf figure on a grave marker. Under it is written "John Sydney died August 2, 1921" It appears to be made of stone and was possibly purchased. See figure # 402.

Figure # 402. Wolf figure at First Nations graveyard. Yukon.

In figure # 403 is another example of an earlier stone wolf. This photograph was taken by Rolf Hougen in 1947 and the Hougen Historical website states: "The wolf statue was located at the Indian grave site on the hill across the Yukon River in Whitehorse. It was vandalized. Rolf Hougen worked with Jim Boss and George Dawson to have another one sculptured but it proved too costly." Interestingly enough the same Indian grave site was again vandalized in 2004 and all the grave houses, fences and markers were tipped over.

Figure # 403. Wolf figure at First Nations graveyard in Whitehorse, Yukon. Now destroyed. Rolf Hougen photograph.

Closing comments

In this chapter I have looked at various aspects of art used in potlatches and on grave sites. Much of the potlatch and death related art is connected to the clans the people belong to. It is from these ceremonies that we find the strongest examples of early Yukon First Nations visual culture-our art. It was during the potlatches that we showed off our art in a big way, not only visually, such as in the large painted sheets from the Atlin potlatch, but also in music, dance and feasting. Storytelling concludes this package. There was art on our spoons, drums, ganhooks, dance shirts, robes, rattles, masks and other items that made up the complete potlatch. Lastly, the potlatch is that cultural practice of my people that has survived most strongly and persistently to this day.

Chapter Nine-Trade Art & Current Period

Trade Art

There are not many examples of art that came from the coast and made its way into the interior. It seems it was more the case that interior art was being traded to the coastal people. A number of examples of art that were traded into the interior from the coast have been shown earlier in this work. See figures # 85 on page 115 for a rattle; # 329 on page for a smock; # 333 on page 318 for a mask and # 371 on page 347 for a Chilkat robe. Next is another example that was traded into the interior, the beautiful spoon in figure # 404. It was collected in Aishihik

Figure # 404. Tlingit sheep horn spoon. VI-Q-15, CMC.

This spoon is in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection and is listed as Southern Tutchone. The spoon looks unlike any of the Yukon First Nations spoons that I have shown so far. As you can see, it is of obvious coastal Tlingit origins because of the placing of the figures on top of each other, as you find in totem poles, and because of the use of the modified ovoid, "L" and "S" shapes. These are not traits of Yukon First Nations art. While there are some examples of southern Yukon First Nations art that do use ovoid shapes they are simpler than and not as refined as this example. This sheep horn spoon was collected by D.D. Cairnes in the summer of 1911 from the Taylor and Drury Store in Whitehorse. The museum catalogue card states:

> Decoration indicated that ladle was intended for a potlatch. Bowl is relatively narrow and deep, handle curves backward slightly and is carved in relief on the upper side with figure of a man, and downward facing body of an animal (frog), below which is a head (bird?) Traces of red and blue pigment on carving. Incised circle and dot designs down back of animal, and down either side of handle. Eyes of man and animal inlaid with copper, eyes of face inlaid with brass. Circle and dot designs coloured with red pigment, last two dots on side are of copper.

The spoon has some blue colouring. The common Yukon First Nations dot and circle motif is present but the coastal Tlingits also used this motif. I have heard from various Southern Tutchone people in casual conversations that there is a Frog House in Hutchi and maybe in Champagne. For this reason I suggest that this spoon may have been traded to Southern Tutchone members of the Frog house. See figure # 405 for a photograph showing details of the frog and other designs on the handle. Mrs. Marge Jackson and Mrs. Emma Shorty also felt this was a trade spoon and that its origins are from the Frog crest in Klukwan. Mrs. Shorty also stated that her grandfather, Jim Fox, made spoons in this fashion.


Figure # 405, detail of Frog spoon. VI-Q-15, CMC.

The trade between the south-central Yukon and coastal Tlingit men carried on until the Klondike Gold Rush and the establishment of trading posts throughout the Yukon. The trading posts effectively ended the big Tlingit trading expeditions into the interior. However, there was still trading between the southern Yukon First Nations people and the coastal Tlingits until at least the 1960s. This trade was conducted between women. At the Sheldon Museum in Haines, Alaska is a gopher skin jacket. See figure # 406. When I first examined the jacket I thought that this was an interior made jacket that was traded to the Chilkat Tlingit, since Athapaskan people made gopher skin coats and there are no gophers in the Haines area. On inquiry I was put in contact with the daughter of the maker of the jacket, Ms. Irene Rowan, a Chilkat Tlingit Elder and political activist. Ms. Rowan informed me that her mother Mildred Sparks made regular trading trips into Southern Tutchone territory after World War Two when the United States Army built the Haines Road that goes from Haines, Alaska to Haines Junction, Yukon Territory. Mildred Sparks would travel to Dalton Post and trade with Ms. Susie Pringle. Ms. Rowan would bring hooligan and seaweed and trade for gopher skins and moose hides. She stated that most moose hides used by the Chilkat Tlingits came from Canada, mainly from Klukshu. The gopher skins were used for coats and also on the inside of blankets that were used for hunting. Ms. Mildred Sparks died in the 1980s.

Figure # 406. Gopher skin jacket. Chilkat Tlingit made. 1985.011.0009, Sheldon Museum.

I was surprised to hear about the continued trade long after the men stopped trading. Through my examination of Yukon First Nations artifacts I slowly began to realize that the trade between the south-central Yukon and the coast was more widespread than I thought. I have come across a number of Yukon First Nations artifacts that were made from sealskin. This baffled me somewhat since, except for the arctic coastline, there are no seals in the Yukon. The example below is a hide-sealskin bag I purchased from an antique dealer in Whitehorse. She stated that this bag came from Carmacks. This bag was assembled from various pieces of hide and sealskin using both hand-stitching and a sewing machine. The beading style is typical of post World War Two beading: a simple central floral bead design. Note in the floral design the use of the outcrops on the stem-work, a typical central Yukon beading trait.

Figure # 407. Hide-sealskin bag, Northern Tutchone. UvK Collection.

The next example is from the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, England. These moccasins were collected in Whitehorse circa 1950. They were collected by Mrs. E. Sargent and she donated them to the museum in 1998. They are made of arctic hare and sealskin and are well worn. The museum notes list the moccasins as Tlingit. Does this mean coastal Tlingit or Inland Tlingit? The moccasins were collected in Whitehorse but we do not know if they were new at that time. See figure # 408 and note the beaded design on the moccasin tops in the detailed photograph. The beaded eagle design is typical for the south-central Yukon except for the face within the body. I think that this is an Inland and coastal Tlingit trait.

Figure # 408. Hide and sealskin moccasins. 1998.17.1-2, PRM.

These examples show a trade of art and materials between the interior and the coast that lasted right up till the 1960s. The trade between women outlasted the men's trade by quite a few decades and few to no historical references have been mentioned about this interesting fact.

Current period

I identify the present period of Yukon First Nations art, consisting of blended styles and outside territory influences, as the Current Period. This period starts with the introduction of trade items that contributed to the decline of men's geometric art. The men were no longer making their own tools and instead were importing them through trade. With these new tools they did not add images or motifs. They might not have had the same pride in an imported tool as opposed to one made with their own hands. If some of the art was formerly done as a form of identification, now the men could simply wrote their names on the tools. With trade, men's art declined and women began using beads and adopted the floral designs. As time progressed men's art almost vanished but women's art, beading that was established in the Beaded Period, did not begin to change until the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898. But the real changed occurred at the completion of the Alaska Highway and related roads built by the United States Army during World War Two. Other than beaded art there was a void of Yukon First Nations art for three decades, from after the construction of the Alaska Highway until the 1970s. This void began to be filled first by the Northwest coast art style and later by other Pan-American Indian imagery. These introduced styles were easy to learn and make since the images were readily available. The result of the changes is that the earlier geometric and beaded styles have become unknown to present day Yukon First Nations artists. This has

created a situation where Northwest Coast Indian art and Pan-Indian images are considered to the traditional art of Yukon First Nations.

Changing beading styles

The decline of the Floral Period started with the Klondike Gold Rush and continued with the introduction of tourism in the area. Up until then each area had its unique beading style. It was possible to look at bead work and have a pretty good idea from what part of the Yukon it came. The beaded work was for personal reasons, such as items for family members, or to trade with groups such as the coastal Tlingits. There was not a big 'market' until the Klondike Gold Rush which caused the decline of the more individual beaded designs. Designs began blending to the point where many designs had the same 'feel' to them. The Han women in the Dawson area started accepting orders and made items and beaded images that would be desirable for the miners and other members of Dawson society. Suddenly, there were a lot of customers. To meet the demands, we can see the complex bead patterns evolve into simpler ones. Another factor in the decline of one of the more expressive periods of Yukon First Nations beading art was the construction of the Alaska Highway. The highway increased the tourist trade and also made travel easier. This resulted in bead patterns being shared to a greater extent than previously. The early floral bead patterns began to merge into more common ones. The earlier bead patterns did not always have flower designs, but with the changes, simple flower designs became the common motif. Mass media also contributed to the merging of bead designs. For example, the T. Eaton's catalogues were sent all across the north and they sometimes had floral pattern examples in them. These were on dresses, table cloths, curtains and so forth. Many of these items were ordered. Yet another factor that caused the 'old style' patterns to fall into disuse was the trading and buying of other peoples' bead designs. It is now a common practice for a person who is making a lot of moccasins or mukluks to buy ready-made beaded tops from anywhere in the Yukon. As a result of this practice, when one person adopts a new bead pattern, it can spread quickly throughout the whole beading community.

There seems to be no problem for a beader to like someone else's bead pattern and copy it. They sometimes call the bead pattern after the creator or place of origin. A noticeable design change with Tutchone beaders is the rare use of the transversal color splitting within petals or leaves. The pedals are now mostly made up of solid colors with a band of color circling the outside of the pedals, or a series of bands within the pedals. Leaves are treated in the same way as the flower pedals, or there may be one color with darker lines incorporated into the design to represent the natural lines of a leaf. See below in figure # 409 for two examples of modern Yukon First Nations moccasins, both made by Southern Tutchone Elder Marge Jackson. She has created both modern beaded style moccasins on the left and a pair of moccasins on the right that is reminiscent of the older styles. The example on the left is a simpler design with a four pedal outlined flower at the end of a green stem and two leaves. The example on the right is more complex with a stem with 'grouse tracks' and three 3-pedal flowers coming off it. Those flowers have had the colour transversal split. Mrs. Jackson stated that she wanted to keep creating older bead designs and that she sometimes does designs that her mother Maggie Jim created.

Figure # 409 Example floral beaded designs by Southern Tutchone Elder Marge Jackson.

The moccasins, which are now the most used palette for bead work, have simpler bead designs but the floral designs are still unique. People who are familiar with their community's beading can identify the maker. See below for another example of a southern Yukon beaded moccasin top. This is a contemporary design that appears on many moccasins in the Whitehorse area.

Figure # 410. Common floral design, Whitehorse area. UvK Collection.

On a side note, it was my examination of such bead works in the late 1980s and early 1990s that revealed the unique art to me. I started painting floral designs as works of art themselves. See a recent example below of a combined floral-geometric design for a drum I painted for well known Yukon First Nations singer, Lacey Scarff.

Figure # 411. Floral-geometric drum design created by UvK, Lacey Scarff Collection.

Fortunately, some floral designs from the past are still done today, such as forget-me-nots and strawberries. Duncan writes about the past use of such plants:

> Figural motifs occur on about three-quarters of the Han pieces in museums-botanically identifiable forms (strawberries, pansies, daisies, forget-me-nots), and eagle, spiders, swastikas, bows and hearts. (Duncan 1989: 152)

Below is a present day example of beaded forget-me-nots made by Southern Tutchone Elder Mary Deguerre.

Figure # 412. Forget-me-nots floral design by Mary Deguerre. UvK Collection.

In figure # 414 is strawberries beaded by Ms. Frances Joe. I have seen strawberries, blueberries on a number of moccasins, mitts and gloves throughout the Yukon. I will write more about Ms. Frances Joe beading in a moment.

The merging of bead patterns happened in the whole south-central but not the north of the Yukon. Because the isolation of the Gwich'in community of Old Crow, the only way to reach the community is by plane, their beading styles did not change nearly as much as their southern neighbors.

This next pair of moccasins in figure # 413 is in fact from Fort MacPherson and was collected in 1955. The only way into Fort MacPherson in 1955 was to fly or by river. In 1979 the Dempster Highway was completed which ran from the interior of the Yukon to Inuvik, Northwest territories.

Figure # 413. Gwich'in moccasins from Fort MacPherson, 1955. VI-I-68a-b, CMC.

If you remember my earlier notes about Gwich'in beaded styles from Chapter Four-Beaded & Floral Designs, you will notice that the beaded area still covers much of the area. Now however, the flower and leaf designs have become much simpler. When the tops are fully beaded they are often referred to in the Yukon as the "Old Crow" style.

Yukon First Nations women continue to add their bead designs to a variety of items such as jackets, vests and baby belts. An example of a recently beaded vest is by Elder Ms. Francis Joe from the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. See figure # 414. When I purchased this vest from Ms. Joe I asked her why she had put eagles on the vest. She said it was because Wolf claims Eagle, meaning that the Eagle comes under the Wolf Moiety (F. Joe, personal communication, 2003). On the back of the vest Mrs. Joe put a central flower and on each side a strawberry motif. Mrs. Joe is well known for her beaded strawberries. Notice that Mrs. Joe used gopher skin in making this vest, something that is very rare today.

Figure # 414, Frances Joe vest. Uvk collection.

Following is an example of a cape recently made by Mrs. Marge Jackson. See figure # 415. On the back of the cape Crow is placed in the central location and is flanked by two floral beaded designs. The floral designs are repeated at the front of the cape. Mrs. Jackson used split colour flower pedals and split colour leaves and is based on her mother, Maggie Jim's bead designs. It is also interesting that Crow is beaded in the same manner as it could be painted in a silhouette style. Mrs. Jackson uses buttons along the edge of the gopher skins as a reminiscent past use of buttons on jackets and other articles of clothing. The bottom half of the cape is made of gopher skins.

Figure # 415, Crow on Marge Jackson cape. Pam van Kampen collection.

The next image, figure # 416, is a beaded wolf and is again made by Elder Marge Jackson (showing off her creation). While I have not seen any traditional images of wolves howling, recently howling wolves have become popular in art. The painting on Johnny Fraser's drum shows a wolf sitting but it does not look like it is howling.

Figure # 416. Champagne and Aishihik Elder Mrs. Marge Jackson with her beaded wolf design.

Besides the simplification of bead designs another change that has occurred is the creation of beaded scenes. The imagery is somewhat like the earlier hunt and warfare scenes discussed in chapter seven. Instead of simply placing the animal or image on a plain background a scene is created around the main image. This is done by adding plants, trees, mountains or other animals. In figure # 417 is a scene with a beaded moose. This bag is in the Field Museum in Chicago and the museum notes state that the bag was made by Mrs. Dora Austin (née Wedge) in 1950. I am impressed with the composition of the moose. There is no question that this is a moose walking in the wilderness. The moose is walking over blue beads and may indicate that the moose is possibly walking over a shallow creek. On each side of the moose are willow brushes, the moose's food. Moose often eat in wet areas so this image is showing the moose in its natural habitat.

Figure # 417. Moose bag by Mrs. Dora Austin, 1950. 2003.4161.337907. Field Museum.

The next bag with a scene on it is also from the Field Museum and was made by Mrs. Angela Sidney. The museum notes state that Mrs. Sidney is Tagish and from Carcross and that the bag was made in 1949 or 1950.

Figure # 418. Angela Sidney made bag. 1949-1950. 2003.4161.337886, Field Museum.

The bag shows three mallard ducks flying. There are also beaded words: “The call of the Yukon” on the bag. This makes me think of a spring scene since the ducks would be flying to the Yukon from the south. There are a series of flower designs between the words and the ducks to balance the scene. The flowers themselves are often the first sign of the coming summer after the melting of the snow. This is followed by the migratory birds that return to the Yukon for the summer. The birds and animals are no longer ‘crests’ but composed in a more or less realistic manner to create a scene familiar to all Yukon First Nations people.

First half of the Current Art Period: move towards realism

While beading styles show a gradual change during the Current Period, the other art forms can be divided distinctly into two halves or time periods. The first is when the art changed from the recognizable geometric into more realistic forms. That is when the artists began adopting new ideas, methods and imagery from the modern western world. The first half of the Current Art Period is from the end of World War Two until the mid-1980s. The second half of the Current Period starts in 1986, when there is a whole-hearted adoption of the Northwest Coast Indian Art style that carries on till today. At that time the emerging realistic style, as well as almost all traditional art styles, were swept aside in favour of all things Northwest Coast Indian.

I will examine a number of drums and carvings to show the art from the early Current Period until the adoption of the Northwest Coast art. The drum below shows art in transition but not toward the Northwest Coast Art style. This drum, although modern, still has the old style geometric designs, much like the geometric designs on the Tanacross ganhook in figure # 351 on page 331. A modern image is added to the drum, a flag that has YUKON painted on it. The drum was obtained by the Glenbow Museum in 1992 and it lists the production date as 1966. The notes state that this drum came from Pelly Crossing, Yukon and is Tutchone. See figure # 419 for a photograph of the drum.

Figure # 419. Tutchone drum from Pelly Crossing, Yukon. AC 548 A-B, Glenbow Museum.

The drum has modern colours of bright red and yellow. The repeating semi-circles and strips along the side are in the geometric style as are the flag and pole. The semi-circles alternate with the red and yellow colours except at the bottom where two reds join. This is the result of the odd-numbered 23 semi-circles. The alternating coloured strips around the outside rim do not match up with the semi-circles. “Yukon” appears on many drums of the 1950s and 1960s. It is also during this time that many of the early Current Period Art images moved toward realism. The more realistic images were painted on drums, carved and beaded. The next drum is an example of a realistic image drawn on a drum, with what appears to be a felt

pen. See figure # 420 for the drawn scene on the Yukon drum that is in the Alaska State Museum collection. The museum notes on this drum state that the drum was made by Billy Fox in 1970 that was then 60 years old. It also states that "Father was 107 when he died in 1962". I wonder if Billy Fox is related to Jim Fox in figure # 89 on page 118, who has been mentioned a couple of times earlier. If they are related then this would be an Inland Tlingit drum.

Figure # 420. Yukon drum. II-C-275, ASM.

The scene is of a duck flying in front of the forest and over a lake in the Yukon wilderness. This is one of the most realistic images on any Yukon Drum I have seen during that time period. The word YUKON is printed across the top.

During the 1960s and 1970s the carvings also became more realistic, like the earlier story-based carvings of Kitty Smith. In figure # 421 is a beaver carved in wood by an unknown artist. It was collected from Teslin and is now in the Field Museum's collection. This beaver was carved in the same style as the animals carved by Leslie Jackson in Teslin in the late 1970s. In the museum are a couple of other Leslie Jackson carvings collected at the same time. Therefore, it is possible that this was also made by Jackson. There is however another person who carved beavers in a very similar style. This is Joe Ladue who carved a beaver in 1968 which is now in the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development collection. See figure # 422 of my drawing of the beaver. Joe Ladue is a Kaska from Ross River but was living in Cowley, a small settlement of people about 20 kilometers south of Whitehorse, at the time he made the beaver. This would place him in a border area between the Tagish and Southern Tutchone territories when he created the work. Two differences can be noted when looking at Ladue's and the Teslin beaver. Ladue's work has the beaver's pattern carved in its tail while the other beaver's tail does not have this. Also, Jackson's beaver has a stick in its mouth. Other than these two differences they are almost identical.

Figure # 421. Yukon First Nations carved beaver. 2003.4161.338043, Field Museum.

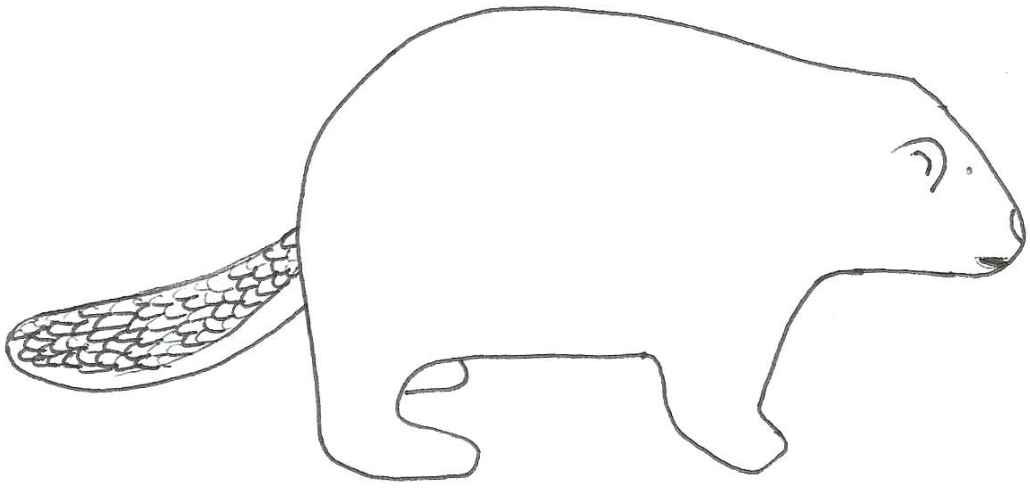


Figure # 422. Carved Beaver by Joe Ladue. Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. UvK drawing.

The carved sheep in figure # 423 was done by Leslie Jackson of Teslin. This artifact is in the Field Museum collection and was purchased in 1977. The natural wood colour is maintained as is the case in many of the carved animals of this time period. A piece of bark is used as the rocky part of the mountain side the sheep is standing on. The sheep is looking at us as if we were approaching it.

Figure # 423. Carved Sheep by Leslie Jackson. 2003.4161.338039, Field Museum

The next animal is a carved goat, again by Leslie Jackson. This example, seen in figure # 424 is also in the Field Museum collection and I believe was collected at the same time as the sheep above. This carving is done in the same manner as the sheep. Both these carvings, while being smaller than Kitty Smith's, are carved in a similar, realistic style. These renderings by Jackson and other carvers of his period were images of animals and targeted the tourist trade. This is confirmed with my conversation with Jimmy Ladue, the son of Joe Ladue, who stated that his father did these carving to sell to tourists. The difference with Kitty Smith's carvings is that, although aimed at the tourist market, they were creations representing stories of Yukon First Nations people. I think this is representational of the gradual and step-wise loss of culture for Yukon First Nations people. Animal images were no longer carved as a direct link between the person and the animal or to represent a story or event. The sole purpose became the sale. This practice was typical in the Yukon in the 1960s and 1970s. Although the carvings were wide spread, there are not many examples to examine. A likely reason is that most of these carved animals were purchased by tourists and ended up in American living rooms as a souvenir of their "I Drove the Alaska Highway" trip.

Figure # 424. Carved goat by Leslie Jackson. 2003.4161.337862, Field Museum

Below is a bear carving done by Les Jackson and is shown in George M. White's *Craft Manual of Yukon Tlingit* on pages 18 and 19. Les Jackson and Leslie Jackson are one and the same.

Figure # 425. Les Jackson bear. UvK Drawing.

It appears that the bear has a fish in its mouth and is standing on a piece of bark to represent the ground beside the river or creek the bear is fishing on. The bear, as well as the other wood carvings, were of a size that would fit on a shelf and could be carried by the person who purchased it. As I have mentioned, most often the carvings were left in natural wood colour. The next carving is an exception. It is of a bird. See figure # 426. With the addition of paint it takes on a very realistic appearance. The painting of animals may have indicated the direction Yukon First Nations art was heading, were it not replaced by the Northwest Coast Indian art style in the 1980s. Ironically, this goose is a more traditional art image for the early Inland Tlingit than the present popular coastal Tlingit art style.

Figure # 426. Carved bird. Field Museum. 2003.4161.338040

Pan-Indianism

With the visual culture void there were also elements of Pan-Indianism that started showing up in the Yukon. With Pan-Indianism is meant those ideas that are generally thought of as being North American "Indian". They are spawned by white people's romantic ideas of what Indians are supposed to be like. The Plains Indians were considered the ideal image of "Indian" and ideas about and practices of their culture became a marketable template. Examples of Pan-Indian practices in the Yukon today are sweet-grass smudges, circle prayers, the 'speaking feather', sweats, and the 'sacred fire'. In visual culture examples of Pan-Indian imagery are the soaring eagle, eagle feathers, the 'end-of-trail warrior' on a horse, dream catchers, war bonnets and teepees.

One result of Pan-Indianism in the Yukon was that the traditional style hide clothing vanished and was replaced by a type of hide clothing that has the appearance of the hide clothing worn by the Indians in western movies: a styled shirt or dress with fringes across the front chest and back as well as along the bottom hem. The traditional style dresses shown earlier were no longer made since they had become unknown. Headbands with sometimes a feather sticking out the back were also added to this appearance. These can be seen in figure # 427 of what appears to be a late 1960s early 1970s photograph of a parade float with First Nations dancers. This photograph would have been taken during the February winter carnival in Whitehorse called the Sourdough Rendezvous.

Figure # 427. Indian display on float during a winter carnival in Whitehorse. George Kellet fonds, 80/118 17, YA.

There are still some distinct Yukon First Nations garments present in the photograph. The second woman on the right is wearing Johnny Joe's jacket over her dress which is shown earlier in figure # 91 on page 119. The dress she is wearing is pointed and may be reminiscent of the earlier pointed tunics. There are at least three button blankets in the photograph, two around George Dawson. Dawson is the man in the group to the right wearing the cowboy hat. The third button blanket is in the left of the photograph being worn by a young girl. While I cannot see if there are any images on the back of the button blankets, the Northwest Coast style button blankets with animal clan designs on the back have by this time taken effect in many of Yukon First Nations' cultural imagery. These blankets were traditionally only traded from the coast by the rich. They were rare and highly prized. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Athapaskans such as the Tutchone and Han did have button blankets which were without the animal or clan designs on the back. There are only a couple left in museum collections and these are rarely seen. The North West Coastal style button blankets are now thought of as a locally created cultural item, indigenous to this area.

My grandfather is the man who is sitting in the right center of the float and is wearing a blanket wrapped around him. Wrapping a blanket around yourself seemed to be a somewhat common practice. See Figures # 141 on page 163 and # 333 on page 318 for examples of blankets use during potlatches. It appears he is working on something, perhaps carving.

Second half of the Current Period: adopting Northwest Coast Indian art

Along the Northwest Pacific coast the First Nations people also experienced a loss of culture. However, when they found themselves in the late twentieth century, they were still surrounded by their long houses, totem poles, bent wood boxes and other examples of their art. They had the examples of their rich visual culture to refer to and were able to maintain and build on it. This was to have a major impact on First Nations art in the Yukon.

The first example I have seen of using the Northwest Coast art style is on the drum in figure # 18 on page 51. I have examined this drum in Chapter One: Cultural & Environmental

Background, Art Periods and Comparative Art Styles. This 1950s drum shows an early transition from the Geometric Art Period towards the Northwest Coast Indian art style.

The next examples of Northwest Coast Indian art shows up in the 1960s. Yukon First Nations artists started seeking to create Native art but found no examples of their own visual culture to refer to. Some of these artists learned from other British Columbia First Nations artists the Northwest Coast Indian art style. In the 1960s Freddie Smith, who is my uncle, was living in the Vancouver area and began learning the Coastal Salish style of Northwest Coast Indian art. The more southern regions of the Northwest Coast Indian art practice are not as solid and block-like as the northern Haida and Tlingit style of Northwest Coast Indian art. The southern styles use thinner and longer lines and do not follow the strict use of ovoid, "U", "S" & "L" form lines. This is the style that Freddie Smith learned and when he returned to the Yukon in the mid 1970s he carried on creating art in this manner. See Freddie Smith in the mid-1970s in the photograph in figure # 428 as well as an example of his art.

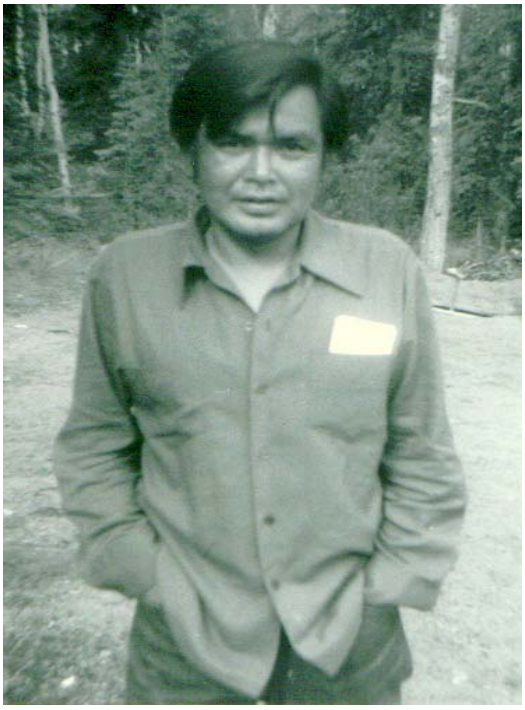
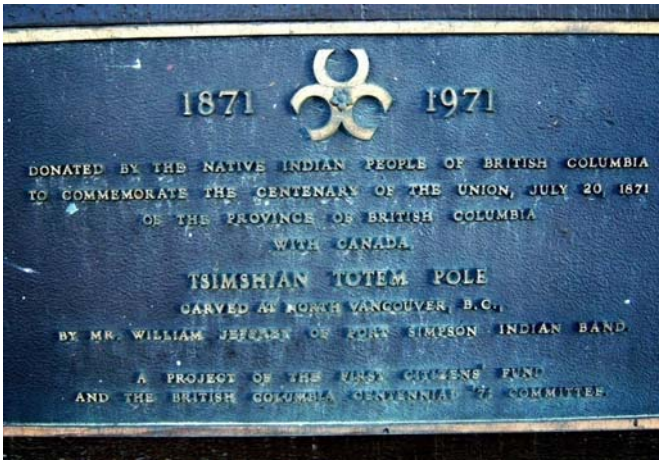


Figure # 428. Freddie Smith and his tabletop. 1976 Uvk Photograph. Hazel Guyett collection.

The art is engraved on a coffee table. Freddie Smith also made a lot of lamps and totem poles which are in collections in British Columbia and the Yukon. There were two or three other artists who were creating various forms of Northwest Coast Indian art during the same time period. This time also gave birth to the first permanent example of First Nations art publicly displayed in Whitehorse. This was the British Columbia centennial totem pole that was gifted to the Yukon in 1971. See figure # 429.



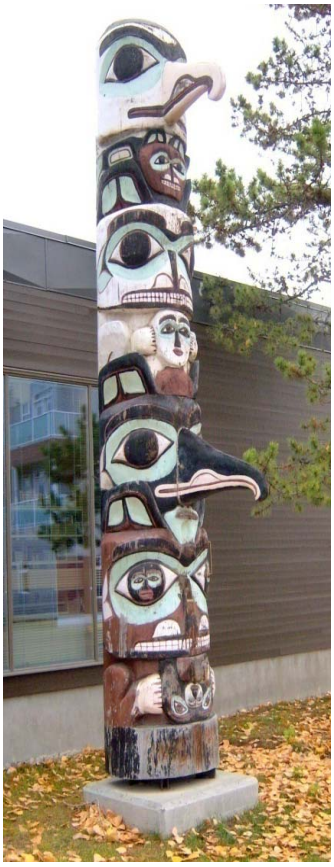


Figure # 429. British Columbia Centennial Tsimshian pole.

With a couple of artists working in the Northwest Coast Indian art style and the Tsimshian totem pole, Yukon First Nations artists started learning the Northwest Coast Indian art style. One person who contributed to this is well known artist Ted Harrison. Ted Harrison was an art teacher from the United Kingdom who had taken a position teaching art at the Yukon Vocational School and later at F.H. Collins High School. When Ted Harrison began teaching art at the Vocational School he noticed that there were no First Nations students and he set about trying to recruit them. Harrison approached the Yukon Native Brotherhood to inquire about possible First Nations students. The Yukon Native Brotherhood recommended Stan Peters. Stan Peters was born in 1945 to an Ahtna father, William Copper Peter, and Northern Tutchone mother, Lena Jack. Stan lived in the wilderness with his family until he was six or seven years old when the Royal Canadian Mounted Police came to his parents' camp and took Stan away to the Catholic Mission School in the northern British Columbia community of Lower Post. Stan stayed in mission schools until he was seventeen years old. Upon his return home Stan began carving. His father carved various animals such as moose, bears, wolves and sheep. These were carved in wood and were about 8 inches high. He left them in the natural wood colour. While I have not seen any of Stan Peters' father's

art, I presume they were close to the small carved animals presented above in figure # 421 on page 388 to # 425 on page 390.

In the early 1960s Stan bought a book on Northwest Coast Indian Art and began to teach himself that style. Stan carved little masks and totem poles up to 12 inches in size. Stan was living in Beaver Creek by that time and it is here that Ted Harrison travelled to ask Stan Peters to enroll in the art program at the vocational school. Stan was impressed that Ted Harrison travelled all the way from Whitehorse, at his own expense, to ask him to join the art program. At the art course Ted Harrison talked to Stan about making a totem pole and after meeting with the Yukon Territorial Government an agreement was reached. With the assistance of Northwest Coast Indian art books Stan carved the totem pole that you can see in figure # 430. The pole was erected in 1973 and became the second totem pole in the Yukon and the first Yukon First Nations carved pole. Stan Peters is still active in his art and lives in Beaver Creek. He has moved away from the Northwest Coast Indian art style to work on his brand of carved Northern Tutchone floral beaded designs as well as nature influenced imagery.

Figure # 430. Stan Peters and his totem pole.

I was influenced by Ted Harrison as well. As a grade ten student at F.H. Collins in 1975 I was in Ted Harrison's art class. He saw that I expressed an interest in Native art and he pointed me toward the Northwest Coast Indian art style. Since there were no other examples of Yukon First Nations art for me to see other than the two totem poles and the carving of my uncle Freddie Smith, the Northwest Coast Indian art seemed to be correct. On

top of that I believed I was Tlingit Indian. Like Stan, I used Northwest Coast Indian art books to learn from. See figure # 431 for examples of my early artwork from 1975. I am standing at the door of Yukon Hall, an Indian residential school, with a friend helping me hold my ink drawings. These drawings were purchased by one of the supervisors at Yukon Hall.

Figure # 431. Ukjese van Kampen's art from 1975.

In 1977 I joined the Canadian Army and later served in the Canadian Airborne Regiment. I was away from the Yukon from 1977 until 1980. In 1982 I joined the United States Marine Corps and served active duty until 1985. Because I served in Canada's elite unit and was now joining the elite branch of the United States military there were a number of newspaper articles published in which one headline stated: 'Yukon Tlingit Joins United States Marines". When my mother saw the article she wrote me a letter and informed me that I was a Northern Tutchone. This was a major surprise to me for I had always thought I was Tlingit. This is an example of the major loss of our culture and the confusion that is left in its wake. Finding myself a Tutchone I felt I should be doing Tutchone art. I began seeking to learn more about Tutchone art. This was followed by Yukon Athapaskan and finally First Nations art from the Yukon and surrounding areas. I realized early on that "Tutchone art" was like the Tutchone language, a dialect of Athapaskan. All Athapaskans speak Athapaskan but groups speak different dialects. The same goes for the art. Art styles are generally the same over a wide area but the details may be different between the different groups of Athapaskan peoples. Since the Inland Tlingit for the most part adopted the interior lifestyle and visual culture, I included their art in my research.

In the meantime there were major developments in Yukon First Nations art. These developments came about because of the works by Keith Wolf-Smarch, an Inland Tlingit. Like many of us young First Nations people in the Yukon in the 1970s and 1980s, he was searching for his culture but found none. While Keith did see the smaller animal carvings that people in his community made he felt he wanted to create a stronger art. There was also the prevailing attitude that these carvings were a craft and not art. Like Stan Peters, Keith Wolf-Smarch began studying books on the Northwest Coast Indian art style in the early 1980s. In 1984, Dempsey Bob, a Tahltan/Tlingit artist, came to the Yukon to teach a Northwest Coast Indian Art design course. Keith took this course and the two soon became friends. In 1985 Dempsey Bob invited Keith to work with him and in May 1986 Keith moved to Prince

Rupert to work with Dempsey for a year. Keith felt it was more important to learn about his culture than to accept an invitation to be a featured artist at the 1986 Expo in Vancouver. After his return to the Yukon, Keith was a talented crest and mask carver and he wanted to use his skill to create cultural items for potlatches and ceremonies for his people. After his training Keith created his first mask, "Young Man Eagle Clan" in March 1986. I mark this as the first modern day Northwest Coast mask created in the Yukon. As time progressed his masks became popular and he became a well known carver. Keith went on to become the Yukon's master carver in the Tlingit style and has had many successes. He is known internationally and has taken his work to many countries overseas including Europe and Japan. Keith also started teaching others about creating Tlingit style art. With Keith's teaching and an increasing interest in First Nations art, the Northwest Coast Indian art style became very popular to the point that the general public now thinks that it is the traditional Yukon First Nations art form. This has cumulated to the point that there is not a single Athapaskan or early Inland Tlingit example of art on permanent display in Whitehorse. There are some examples of beadwork from the Yukon Permanent- and other collections that are rotated in and out of display cases, but nothing permanent. There are a couple of examples of early Athapaskan or Inland Tlingit images on display but these were not even created by First Nations artists.

Figure # 432. Keith Wolf-Smarch and one of his many poles. This example is in the Yukon Government Permanent Collection.

The only exception to the Northwest Coast Indian art creation is from the Kaska. In the late 1980's carving instructors started going to Ross River to teach the Northwest Coast art style and mask making. Carvers like Keith Wolf Smarch, Dempsey Bob and Norman Tait all taught the Northwest Coast art style in workshops at Ross River. Local carvers such as Norman Sterriah, Joe Glada and William Atkinson took these workshops and learned the Northwest coast art style. After about five years the style slowly changed. The Kaska carvers realized that the Northwest Coast art style was not from their area and began changing their approach. Some of the masks still have the influence of the Tlingit style masks while others seem to have been influenced by the False Face masks made by the Iroquois people. Many of

the present Kaska style masks are quite close to the traditional Yukon face masks that were discussed earlier. Some of the Kaska carvers have their own unique style. For example, Norman Sterriah produces masks that have a direct connection to events in present day Kaska society. He often makes masks that are about the land claims negotiations with the federal and territorial governments. Norman also has a mask that is a face with a wide open mouth with three smaller faces inside the mouth. See figure # 433 below. This mask is showing the negotiation process, that is, talks between the Kaska people, the Yukon and federal governments.

Figure # 433. Norman Sterriah mask.

Northwest Coast Indian art is now totally accepted, by First nations and non-First Nations alike, as the traditional art form of the Yukon First Nations people. Northwest Coast Indian art is the most common taught art. In the next section of this chapter I will look at some of the reasons of the lack of interest in the traditional art forms of the Yukon.

Current artistic issues

During the years I was growing up in the Yukon, the official history we learned began with the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898. There was little interest in Yukon First Nations culture. While this is now changing there was still a huge gap in cultural and historical understanding between First Nations people and white people. Many of the people who are in positions of cultural and artistic authority are often not from the Yukon. They do not understand the cultural past of the Yukon, but even longer time "Yukoners" lack often in First Nations historical knowledge. Consultation and cooperation of government employees with First Nations people can still be a challenge. An example of this attitude can be seen

with the Yukon Arts Centre's art exhibition of June 2007 where the YAC and MacBride Museum held an exhibition of Yukon First Nations art; *Beads: patterns in time* without any First Nations person directly involved. This is not an isolated event and seems quite acceptable when dealing with First Nations people. Yet it would not be acceptable when dealing with other peoples. For example an exhibition of women's art without any input from women, or an exhibition of Canadian French people's art without these people's input would be totally unacceptable today. Yet these organizations feel it is perfectly okay to have exhibitions of First Nations art without First Nations involvement. The people in positions to decide such events still do not recognize their obligations about giving First Nations people the deciding powers when dealing with First Nations issues. I can give another example. In 2006, as the curator of the Society of Yukon Artists of Native Ancestry, I created an art exhibition about masks at the Yukon Arts Centre. The reaction from the attending public was very positive and a television show was produced about the exhibition. This was produced by the Northern Native Broadcasting Yukon and the show still is aired on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network. But the reaction from the Yukon Arts Centre was an extremely negative e-mail sent to the office administer of the Society of Yukon Artists of Native Ancestry. A substandard exhibition was hinted to, the ethics of me, including my work in the exhibition, was questioned. My personal behavior was questioned and the future relationship between the Yukon Arts Centre and the Society of Yukon Artist of Native Ancestry became shaky. I believe it was because they did not like the loss of control, since they had no say in the content of the exhibit. It was a First Nations curated exhibition about First Nations art and history. There were no non-First Nations input to the exhibition other than providing the space and some of the funding. These (unconscious) colonial attitudes are still a barrier for the development and understanding of Yukon First Nations culture.

Yet the white non-governmental organizations and government are not totally to blame. The Yukon First Nations' non-confrontational ways are also contributing to the challenge. To understand the situation requires a separate and more detailed study in the field of relationships between Yukon First Nations and non-First Nations. There are a number of issues at hand that contribute to the present situation. I will reflect briefly on some of the factors that I think play a role. The first five are related to factors that have influenced the loss of our culture and the last one is related to present day forces that keep the culture suppressed.

Language

Almost all the fluent speakers of Native languages in the Yukon were born before the building of the Alaska Highway in 1942 and in the next twenty years most of them will have passed on. The present younger speakers are few and they often speak like children! First Nations 55 and older accounted for only 13% of all Aboriginal people in Yukon in 2006 and they are the majority of fluent Native language speakers. Yukon First Nations languages are in serious trouble. Personally I do not speak Tutchone and only know a couple of people around my age (52) who almost speak their language fluently. They still make grammar and pronunciation errors that are quite amusing to Elders. Furthermore, many of the traditional words used when living a hunter-gatherer existence have vanished. Because we are living in a modern western society many new words have been invented to describe all devices and situations that exist today. Sadly, in the Yukon, the third most spoken language after French and English is German, at about 950 speakers. There are more German speakers in the Yukon than all the Yukon First Nations speakers combined! There are also 150 Dutch first language speakers in the Yukon, greater than the two largest Native language groups (Gwich'in and Inland Tlingit).

Art/visual culture

Since there are no examples of the early Yukon First Nations art on public display or any efforts to show more traditional Yukon First Nations art, many Yukon First Nations people, including artists, have little chance of seeing their own visual culture. The result of this lack of reference is reduced interest in a revival of the earlier art forms. At present the market for First Nations art is the Northwest Coast style. The original early Yukon First Nations art styles are unknown and would hold little interest for buyers. We as a people have put little effort in researching and promoting our past culture and instead are happy to just let things carry on the way they are going. The problem with this is that this affects our self-identity which in turn affects our self-esteem as a people. A lack of self-esteem leads to social problems of which there are many.

Religion/spirituality

I think it is safe to say that the potlatch is a last remaining expression of our spiritual life. Gone is the belief in the white winter, animal, sky and other worlds; gone is the belief of the power of animals such as their ability to hear and understand what we are saying, the owl who foretells the coming bad news or spirit helpers who guide us. Gone are many of the taboos. These losses cannot have but huge implications for how we find meaning in our lives, how we fit into this present day world and the sense of where we came from. We have lost our rituals and understanding of why things are done. Today's society has different values and our adaptation to them is only successful from a superficial perspective. Our spirituality has been largely replaced by Christianity and there are some people who have adopted Pan-Indian spiritualism. This replacement has made traditional objects without meaning and therefore interest.

Living off the land/traditional lifestyle

Indistinguishable from our spirituality is the land and the relationship to it. In fact, the land was our spirituality. We did not live apart from nature, we were integrated with nature. We were part of this land and did not "own" it in the sense of how land is owned in modern society. This land is our last solid connection to our past and culture. We can stand here on the soil and tell of our ancestors' activities, providing we still know our history. Many of us no longer know our history with the land. This connection is becoming less and with that the relationship to objects and visual art made directly from the land.

We have also lost our ability to live off the land and as a result spend little time there. Some Elders are spending most of their time in the bush but they are few and far between. There are younger people going to the land but those are only visits. It may be for hunting or going to a fish camp but after that they return to the city.

Acceptance of status quo/unconscious expectations

There are a number of unconscious expectations we place on each other. White people are successful, Indians are not; White people are rich, Indians are poor; Indians are drunk on Main Street, white people much less so; White people go to university, Indians do not. You may think this is rhetoric from the 1950s and this is not the case anymore. Well, yes and no. It is true that opportunities for Indians in the Yukon have greatly caught up with the white population. It is also true that racism has vastly reduced. But what about our deeper thoughts and expectations that even First Nations people have adopted? An example is when my First

Nation, Kwanlin Dun First Nation, hired a white person as the first Executive Director for the new cultural centre in Whitehorse. The First Nation did not even attempt to hire a First Nations person for the position, feeling that we as a people cannot handle running our own cultural center without it failing. My First Nation did create a training position at the cultural centre but I suspect it will be years before a First Nations is running it.

Economic development as the golden rule

The downside to the lack of early Yukon First Nations visual culture is that there has also been little effort from the First Nations governments to push culture, since their focus has been on land claims governance and economical development. In a way this may be a mixed blessing since I feel now that Northwest Coast art has become too commercial and as a result has begun to lose its meaning and cultural value for its people. When an image of a clan crest is reproduced by the thousands on cups, t-shirts or prints, you have to question what the real cultural value of that art is. That art has now lost its power and any sacredness that it once held. Can the creator understand and tell you the stories that their art represents? But then, what is the worse deal: traditional art being obscure and mostly forgotten or art that is tainted with commercial intentions.

It is hard not to be swiped away by western bureaucracy and capitalism and at the same time keep practicing our own values. Thus, we also place economical development ahead of culture. What good is an economic development program without the deep understanding of our culture? It is band aid practice, not irrelevant but less important than answering the question: who are we and where do we come from? Our traditional visual art can help us answer this question. It can make us proud, again. I hope this dissertation provides a piece to the answer.

Final Comments

For the last 200 years the art of the Yukon and surrounding areas has experienced ongoing change. This has mirrored the changes in the lives of the Yukon First Nations people: religion, language, lifestyles, political structure, spirituality, etc. The introduction to trade and beads resulted in the first big change: an end to quill work and a decline of the geometric Athapaskan art style. The second change was caused by the Gold Rush and a third by the building of the Alaska Highway. Representation through painting, engraving and bead work lost its traditional meaning and, like many other aspects of life, became part of the western money making society. This resulted in a decline of the earlier, more individual artistic styles and an increase in the easier to make, common bead patterns for mass production and the rule-bound Northwest Coast Indian art styles. In many cases the older geometric patterns, quill patterns and the once popular gopher skin robes have been replaced by Pan-Indian and Northwest Coast Indian art styles. All these changes have resulted in a lost knowledge of traditional art and an acceptance as traditional of recent Northwest Coast and Pan-Indian art and imagery.

It is this cultural void that started my search for my people's art. This dissertation is the first complete overview of the historical art of Yukon First Nations. While I do not believe that the final publication of this thesis will change any of the present day First Nations arts practices, it will become a point of reference for those people who do want to learn what the early art was like. With this thesis I feel I have proven that we, Yukon First Nations people, did in fact have a rich visual culture and unique art form.

In the introduction I give a background on how this thesis was born and the obstacles that I faced at the beginning of my research. In the second chapter I give a very brief cultural overview of the early Yukon First Nations world view. In this chapter I also identify the three artistic periods of Yukon First Nations art history: the Geometric Period, the Beaded Period and the Current Period, and give some insight into the differences between various First Nations groups. In the next four chapters I describe the basic structure of the art. In Chapter Two-Geometric & Decorative Arts, I catalogue the common geometric motifs and give examples of where these motifs are used, especially referring to the Geometric Period. The third chapter I look at the clothing with its style changes. This chapter deals with art from both the Geometric and Beaded Periods. In Chapter Four-Beaded & Floral Designs I discuss the artistic styles that resulted from the introduction of beads in the Yukon. This chapter covers the Beaded period of Yukon First Nations art and I work at identifying regional styles within the Yukon. I try to relay that this is one of the more expressive times in Yukon First Nations art. In the next chapter on Figurative art I divide the images up into stick figures and outlined and silhouette images. I also examine carving and beaded imagery. I think this chapter will go a long way in dispelling the idea that Yukon First Nations people did not have a figurative art.

From analyzing the art I switch to showing where, how and by whom the art was used in the next three chapters. In Chapter Six-Art of Rituals, Shamans & Stories I show the ritual, shaman and story related objects that the art was placed on. In the next chapter I do the same for the tools used in hunting and warfare. I also give a brief overview of the Yukon First Nations style of warfare which is probably different from what people would expect. I leave Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death towards the end as it is one of the most artistic visual activities Yukon First Nations people were involved in. I give an overview of the main objects that were used during the potlatch and then show examples of grave art.

The last chapter is related to those art forms that are not traditional in the Yukon. I describe the historical events that gave rise of the Northwest Coast Indian art that filled the cultural gap created by a combination of government policy, western societies' practices and

our own very adaptable First Nations traits. The thesis gives the reader a basic understanding of our traditional art and the changes it underwent till present day.

I hope that with this thesis I spawn some interest in the subject and provide a starting point for further research. I especially hope that my people benefit from this research. I believe we have to "own" our art and culture and become the main, and official, experts. As I mentioned in the introduction, this does not mean that some non-First Nations have not contributed to research in our culture, and I for one certainly have respect for their efforts. However, a change is called for from "being researched" to "telling our own story". Unfortunately, we don't have the luxury of time and if we don't act now, soon enough we become "outsiders looking in".

The more I discover, the more I learn that I am just seeing the tip of the iceberg. I am coming across more examples all the time, even as I work on the final edit of this dissertation! There are sure to be many more artifacts of early Yukon First Nations art hidden away in many museums and private homes around the world, waiting to be discovered.

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Abbreviations:

AHS	Atlin Historical Society
ASL	Alaska State Library
ASM	Alaska State Museum
BM	British Museum
CAFN	Champagne and Aishihik First Nations
CMC	Canadian Museum of Civilization
CMS	Church Mission Society (Anglican)
CYFN	Council of Yukon First Nations
DCM	Dawson City Museum
DSMHS	Dawson City Museum & Historical Society
IPC	Ice Patch Collection
KMNH	Kluane Museum of Natural History
MM	Manitoba Museum
MOA	Museum of Anthropology (UBC)
NMAI	National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian
NMF	National Museum of Finland
NMNH	National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian
OMI	Missionnaires Oblats de Marie-Immaculée
PRM	Pitt River Museum
ROM	Royal Ontario Museum
SJM	Sheldon Jackson Museum
UAF	University of Alaska Fairbanks
UBC	University of British Columbia
UvK	Ukjese van Kampen
YA	Yukon Archives
YNLC	Yukon Native Language Centre

Summary

This thesis is to argue that contrary to the present opinion in the Yukon that there was little or no early Yukon First Nations art, there was in fact an established First Nations artistic tradition in the Yukon before the coming of the white man and also into the early contact years. It is also the general belief of the people of the Yukon that the traditional art is the Northwest Coast Indian art even thou there are very few examples of that art style seen before the mid-1980s. I present a case that the adoption of the Northwest Coast Indian art style is a recent development and has no roots in the early Yukon.

In the Introduction I start off by showing my personal involvement into the research of the early First Nations art of the Yukon. I next illustrate the various forces that has brought about the almost non-existence of many examples of the early First Nations art from the Yukon. In Chapter One I give a cultural background about Yukon First Nations people as a starting point to better understand the art. I then divide Yukon First Nations art into three 'periods'; The Geometric Period, the Beaded Period, and the Current Period and carry on to point out some major differences between the interior made Yukon art and the type of art that was created along the Northwest Coast. Once I have established a background to the art created in the Yukon I begin describing art from the Geometric Period in Chapter Two. I do this by identifying the common motifs used and showing examples of where the art was placed. In the next chapter I describe evolution of clothing styles as a vehicle for the art from the Geometric Period into the Beaded Period. In Chapter Four I focus on the Beaded Period by describing the five beading styles from different areas of the Yukon. In Chapter Five I analysis the figurative imagery that Yukon First Nations people created.

Before Chapter Six I have been describing what the art forms looked like but from Chapter Six onward I switch to describing how the art was used. In Chapter Six I present examples of the art that was used in rituals, used by shamans and art that was created to tell a story. In Chapter Seven I describe the art that is related to hunting and warfare and in Chapter Eight I describe those art pieces used during one of our strongest cultural activities, the potlatch.

The final chapter carries on with the history looking at the artistic developments that occurred during the Current Period. Included in this chapter is a description of the art that was traded into the early Yukon.

With these chapters I describe what the problems are and how that the early Yukon First Nations art almost vanished from the present day Yukon visual culture, what the early art looked like and how it was used. I end the thesis with a description of the situation in the present day Yukon. This thesis does prove there was a significant art tradition before the coming of the white man even if there are extremely few public examples to see today and even if the general public has no knowledge of the art. Because of the lack of historical resources this thesis now becomes the foundation for further research into the history of Yukon First Nations art.

Nederlandse samenvatting (Dutch summary)

Nederlandse samenvatting van het proefschrift *History of Yukon First Nations Art* ("Geschiedenis van de Kunst van de Eerste Naties van de Yukon") van Ukjese van Kampen

In dit proefschrift betoog ik dat de huidige overheersende opvattingen over de traditionele Yukon-kunst onjuist zijn. Ik probeer aan te tonen dat er voor de komst van de blanken in de Yukon al sprake was van Indiaanse kunst. Tevens ben ik van mening dat de kunst van de Noordwestkust Indianen niet van oudsher werd beoefend in de Yukon. Deze kunst werd pas in een recente periode overgenomen.

In de inleiding beschrijf ik mijn persoonlijke betrokkenheid bij het onderzoek naar het verleden van de Indiaanse kunst van de Yukon. Ik geef aan wat de verschillende oorzaken zijn van de omstandigheid dat de voorbeelden van onze Yukon-Indiaanse kunst zo schaars zijn. In het eerste hoofdstuk bespreek ik de achtergronden van de Yukon-Indiaanse cultuur. Vervolgens deel ik de Yukon-Indiaanse kunst in drie perioden in: de Geometrische Periode, de Kralenperiode en de Huidige Periode. Daarbij geef ik de belangrijkste verschillen aan tussen de Yukon-kunst en de kunst van de Noordwestkust.

Hoofdstuk twee beschrijft de Geometrische Periode. Daarin identificeer ik gemeenschappelijke motieven en geef voorbeelden van voorwerpen met bijbehorende kunst. In het derde hoofdstuk beschrijf ik de ontwikkeling van kledijstijlen en de daarbij behorende kunst. In de kledij zijn zowel de geometrische kunst als de kralenkunst vertegenwoordigd. Het vierde hoofdstuk is gewijd aan de Kralenperiode met een beschrijving van stijlen uit de verschillende deelgebieden van de Yukon. In hoofdstuk vijf analyseer ik de figuratieve kunst van de Yukon-Indianen.

Na de inventarisering van kenmerken van de Yukon-Indiaanse kunst in de vorige hoofdstukken, ga ik over op een beschrijving van het gebruik van de verschillende voorwerpen waarbij kunst een rol speelt. In hoofdstuk zes geef ik voorbeelden van rituele voorwerpen en de daarbij behorende kunst. Het gaat daarbij voornamelijk om voorwerpen die gebruikt werden door sjamanen. Hierbij beschrijf ik ook kunst die verbonden is met verhalen. Hoofdstuk zeven geeft een overzicht van de kunst die gerelateerd was aan de jacht en de oorlog. Hoofdstuk acht gaat over kunstvoorwerpen die gebruikt werden voor de "potlatch" (traditioneel Indiaans feest), onze belangrijkste culturele activiteit.

Tenslotte beschrijf ik in het laatste hoofdstuk de artistieke ontwikkelingen die onder de Indianen van de Yukon hebben plaatsgevonden gedurende de Huidige Periode. Daarbij verwijs ik tevens naar de kunst die in het verleden binnen de Yukon werd verhandeld.

Ik beëindig het proefschrift met een overzicht en een mogelijke verklaring van de huidige situatie van de Indiaanse kunst in de Yukon. Heden ten dage is er helaas een groot tekort aan traditionele Yukon-Indiaanse kunst. In het licht van het ontbreken van historische hulpbronnen, kan dit onderzoek als basis dienen voor toekomstig onderzoek naar het verleden van de Yukon-Indiaanse kunst.

Propositions

[Stellingen, behorend bij het proefschrift *History of Yukon First Nations Art* van Ukjese van Kampen]

1. *The Yukon First Nations people were able to survive in the coldest location in North America since time immemorial…that in itself says something about their strength!*

2. *The environment and semi-nomadic lifestyle had a major effect on the Yukon First Nations art style and its perception by the people.*

3. *Yukon First Nations art was part of life as was the spirituality: these were not separate to daily lives; they were integrated into day to day living, integrated into the very being of the people.*

4. *Yukon First Nations oral tradition expresses the appreciation of its art in terms such as "Yukon people are hunting, and they've got nice skin clothes--Oh, gee, porcupine quills, moose skins, moccasins! Everything nice." (Annie Ned)*

5. *So far no evidence has been found of any missionaries teaching beadwork to Yukon First Nations. This leads to the question where the beaded floral designs came from.*

6. *The idea that "Yukon First Nations do not have a tradition of creating figurative art" is still widely spread among archaeologists, museum curators, students and the general public.*

7. *Yukon First Nations people did not know about spiritualism as being something outside their lives to strive for, since spiritualism was an integral part of them…they lived it every day. The rituals were the markers to important events of their lives.*

8. *Athapaskan warfare generally implied that when an attack was finally decided, all enemies - men, women and children - had to be killed in order to prevent any possible retaliation.*

9. *Yukon First Nations oral tradition holds: "That time all the people come. First came the Aishihik people. Then Dalton Post people. These ones don't come quick-Little Salmon, Big Salmon. Then comes Carcross. That time I saw it, "old fashioned". They dance with it. Clothes, blankets, button blankets, moose hoof blankets - akéganthät they call it." (Annie Ned 1984).*

10. *In order to survive in such a harsh environment Yukon First Nations people had to be highly adaptable. When new trade items began appearing in the Yukon in the mid-1800s these articles were quickly adopted. Accompanying this change was the forced assimilation by the Canadian Government. This combination effectively eliminated Yukon First Nations visual culture. They have since used the closest surviving visual culture in the region, the Northwest Coast Indian art style.*

Curriculum Vitae

Ukjese van Kampen was born Neil Eugene Smith on the 11th June 1959 in Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada. His father was first Generation Canadian from Scotland but Ukjese had almost no contact with his father's side of the family. Ukjese's mother, Hazel Smith, was born in Fort Selkirk, Yukon. She is Northern Tutchone and of the Wolf Clan. Ukjese comes from a prominent First Nations family. His great-grandmother, Annie Ned, who gave Ukjese his Indian name, is a member of the Order of Canada as is her son, Elijah Smith. Both the mother and father's sides of Hazel Smith's family came from a long line of chiefs.

Ukjese himself has lived an exciting life. He served 4 years in the Canadian Army serving first in the Royal Canadian Regiment as a Mechanized Infantryman and later as an Airborne Commando in the Canadian Airborne Regiment and finally a year in the reserves. His military career carried on with spending 6 years as a Combat Engineer in the United States Marine Corps, 3 active and 3 reserves. Later Ukjese was a 2nd Lt. and Commanding Officer of the Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron in Whitehorse from 1994 to 1995.
During this whole time Ukjese created art and earned various commercial pilot licences and ratings. In 1988 Ukjese earned a Fine Arts Diploma and the next year started a 20 year career working as a flight instructor and bush pilot. This career was highlighted by starting the first 100 percent First Nations owned aviation company in the Yukon in 1994. During this time he earned an Airline Transport Pilot Licence and the highest airplane rating that can be obtained such as Class One Instructor Rating, Class One Aerobatic Instructor Rating & Class One IFR Rating. He also was a Designated Flight Test Examiner for Transport Canada.

Ukjese married his girlfriend of seven years in the Lausanne Cathedral in Switzerland in 1996. He took his wife's family name and changed his first name for his Indian name, becoming Ukjese van Kampen. Ukjese did this to maintain his culture's tradition of tracing the children through the mother. In 1998 Ukjese sold his business after the birth of his first daughter and became a house husband. During this time Ukjese continued to fly as a part time bush pilot and began a series of studies. In 2002 he earned his Bachelor of Fine Art degree with the British Columbia Open University and a Master of Art in Cultural Studies with Athabasca University in 2006. In 2008 Ukjese left flying to focus on his PhD in Indian American Studies at Leiden University in the Netherlands.

During the whole time Ukjese was active in the arts. He worked in a number of cultural related positions starting in 2003 as an Intern Curator for a year at the Yukon Arts Centre Gallery and in 2005 completed a six month training position at the Arts Branch of the Yukon Government. After that he was the curator of the Society of Yukon Artist of Native Ancestry until 2007. Ukjese had been creating art since he was a boy and over the years has been part of over 80 art exhibitions world-wide. This includes exhibitions in Japan, Australia, Germany, and across Canada and the United States. His art is in such collections as the Indian Arts Centre in Ottawa, the Bavarian State Anthropology Museum, Ushiku City Museum in Japan and Yukon Archives. Ukjese has also done a bit of acting and storytelling and is a published writer of his brand of First Nation stories. Ukjese was featured in a number of magazines and books such as the Winter 2008 issue of American Indian Art magazine and the book *About Face* published by the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Ukjese travels a great deal and has been around the world and to about 45 countries.
Ukjese lives in Whitehorse with his wife and two daughters and carries on researching art, First Nations and military history as a hobby as well as creating art.